

15th Annual Bell County Senior Expo a success



BELTON JOURNAL/Emma Gill
15-year-old Lake Belton High School student, Hayden Maroney starts off her singing performance at the 15th Annual Bell County Senior Expo with a beautiful rendition of the National Anthem. The community came together for the event to celebrate 250 years of the Army, Marines & Navy’s courage & sacrifice.

By Emma Gill
The Belton Journal

On Tuesday, September 23rd the 15th Annual Bell County Senior Expo kicked off with a bang at 8am. The large event was hosted at the Cadence Bank Center (Bell County Expo Center). The Expo had over 200 booths set up to provide seniors of the community with information and resources. It was organized by The Belton Journal, which has been a part of the original sponsors for the past fifteen years. The size of the event has tripled over the past several years.

Liz Bovard, with Embrace Hospice, spoke about the abundance of services and resources provided at the event. “I’m excited about the opportunity that it provides for seniors to get educated and made aware of all the different sources that are provided for them.” She highlighted the networking each business was able to do within the expo, adding “it does a really good job about support-

ing a community, at a time that seniors really need it.”

The owner of The Belton Journal, David Tuma, stated that “it connects seniors with different organizations and businesses without high-pressure sales, that they might not think about.” These services ranged from funeral homes to gutter systems, all focusing on providing information instead of sales. Kimberly Cables, Favorite SalesGirl and Senior Expo Coordinator of The Belton Journal, elaborated. “We want to provide a stress-free environment where there’s lots of fun, entertainers and speakers. We don’t allow the vendors to sell anything because we want you to just feel like you can get the information and go home and make an informed decision and really take your time selecting your perfect fit.” Tuma added, “And I think you’ll see a really good variety of different organizations and businesses that you can get information from, and that there are other

seniors like you.”

An excited attendee, Danielle Moody, raved about the resources and contacts she had made by attending. “We came last year and had a blast! And they give you so much information.” Moody added, “I told my boss, I shouldn’t say this, I told him I had an appointment so I could come here.”

Another booth in the Expo was the Belton Senior Activity Center. The Activity Director, Judy Owens, said about the event “I love it. Just the joy of being out here.” She was excited to see the people who were able to socialize and see each other again, saying she saw “so many sweet people that I would not have known otherwise.”

Cables, who has headed organizing the event for five years, said, “It takes so many people year-round to make this a successful event. We could not do

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Local DAR chapter holds Bells Across America event



BELTON JOURNAL/Michele Weisman
Members of the Betty Martin Chapter of the DAR celebrate the signing of the Constitution with the annual Bells Across America.

By Michele Weisman
The Belton Journal

The Betty Martin Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution gathered on the steps of the Bell County Courthouse, Wednesday, September 17 for the annual Bells Across America observation.

Citizens were invited to ring bells signifying the anniversary of the signing of the U.S. Constitution, Sept 17, 1787, in Philadelphia, where church bells rang.

Janie Reed, Regent of the Betty Martin Chapter, said, “We are not political. We just are proud to be Americans, and that’s why we felt like this was such a worthy cause to bring back this tradition to Bell County.”

Reed added, “Debbie Paye, DAR Chair for Constitution Week...she is actually at one of the elementary schools because Salado, Belton, and Temple ISD are participating as well. So, she’s around the flagpole with the youth. It was my honor to be here at the courthouse steps to call attention to everything.”

Lynsey Patrick, District Director for Hillary Hickland, on behalf of Brad Buckley, State Representative,

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Seven Belton ISD schools earn Purple Star designation

Special to the Journal

Seven Belton ISD schools have now been recognized as Purple Star Designated Campuses, a prestigious honor awarded to schools that go above and beyond to support military-connected students and their families.

The newest campuses to receive this designation—Charter Oak Elementary, High Point Elementary and Lake Belton Middle School—join Lakewood Elementary, Southwest Elementary, Belton Middle School and Belton High School in being celebrated for their commitment to ensuring military students feel welcomed and supported throughout their educational journey.

“Nearly 30 percent of our students are military-connected, and we are honored to serve them,” said Dr. Malinda Golden, Belton ISD Superintendent. “These Purple Star designations recognize the intentional work happening on our campuses to ensure students feel supported and valued, no matter how many times they may have to transition schools. It is a privilege to walk alongside our military families and provide the stability and care their children deserve.”

Each school earned the Purple Star designation by meeting rigorous criteria, including establishing a dedicated campus-based military liaison, maintaining resources for military families and implementing transition programs to ease

the adjustment for students moving due to military-related relocations. These campuses also engage in ongoing military appreciation activities, demonstrating their deep respect for the sacrifices of service members and their families.

Belton ISD fosters student-led programs such as Military Student Ambassadors, where peers mentor and support incoming military students, ensuring a smooth transition into the school community. The district also proudly observes Purple Up! Day each year, celebrating military families and strengthening connections between students and their parents serving in the armed forces. Additionally, Belton ISD

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Courtesy photo
BISD hosts an event for the district’s Adopt-A-Unit program. Seven Belton ISD campuses have been awarded a Purple Star designation.

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Council proclaims Hunger Action Month, National Manufacturing Day

By David Stone
The Belton Journal

The Belton City Council named September as Hunger Action Month during this week’s meeting.

According to the proclamation, signed by Belton Mayor David K Leigh, Hunger Action Month is a nationwide campaign designed to raise awareness and inspire action to help end hunger in America and in local communities. It is an annual event

held every September.

According to Leigh, the rate of food insecurity has increased from 16.4 percent to 17.6 percent in the past year.

“During Hunger Action Month, communities across the nation come together to raise awareness of hunger and take action to support organizations such as the Central Texas Food Bank,” Leigh said. “Their mission helps restore strength, stability and a sense of normalcy to thousands of households in need.”

According to the proclamation, Central Texas Food Bank is the largest hunger relief charity in the region, providing nearly 54 million meals last year for families and local nonprofits that turn to them for support.

“The City of Belton supports efforts to alleviate hunger and encourages all residents to donate food, volunteer and raise awareness to ensure no one in our community goes without the nourishment they need to thrive,” Leigh said.

In addition to Hunger Action Month, the city council also declared Friday, Oct. 3 as National Manufacturing Day in Belton, and Cynthia Hernandez, executive director of Belton Economic Development Corporation, was presented with a proclamation.

Again, Leigh presented the proclamation and said National Manufacturing is an initiative to celebrate modern manufacturing and to

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Troy Ashford
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Construction of 7-mile Belhouse pipeline linking Belton Lake to Stillhouse likely to begin in 2028

By David Stone
The Belton Journal

Construction on a one-way pipeline connecting Belton Lake to Stillhouse Hollow Reservoir is expected to begin in 2028 and be operational by 2032, according to an expert with the Brazos River Authority.

BRA is a governmental entity responsible for developing, managing and protecting the water resources of the Brazos River Basin in Texas. Its activities include operating reservoirs and dams, managing water supplies for municipalities, agriculture, and industry, and providing wastewater services.

“The permitting and design phase for the project began in May of this year,” said Brad Brunett, chief operations officer for the Authority. “Design for both the intake structure and pipeline are underway by the Walker Partners engineering team and they are expected to be complete in early 2026.”

“Coordination with the US Army Corps of Engineers is also in progress — construction is expected to begin in 2028,” Brunett said.

He said the pipeline route that was presented at the public hearing in 2023 will be pursued, with some minor deviations as a result of recent development.

The pipeline will allow water to flow from Belton Lake to Stillhouse, to provide water for drought-related needs in Austin’s booming northern suburbs.

“As populations in the Georgetown and Round Rock areas grow, there won’t be enough water for Brazos River Authority customers served by Lake Georgetown,” Brunett said.

“Lake Georgetown is small — Stillhouse is about 6 times larger than Georgetown, and Belton Lake is about 14 times larger,” he said. “During dry times, there simply is not enough water in Lake

Georgetown to meet the needs.”

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, Georgetown is one of the fastest growing cities in America, and its population of 104,000 is expected to double in less than seven years.

The Brazos River Authority has been pumping water from Stillhouse to Lake Georgetown for years, but the potential amount of water being moved will soon increase, Brunett said.

A whopping 20 billion gallons of water every year could be piped from Stillhouse Hollow Reservoir to Lake Georgetown in the next few years, and up to 9.8 billion gallons could be moved annually from Belton Lake to Stillhouse by the Belhouse pipeline.

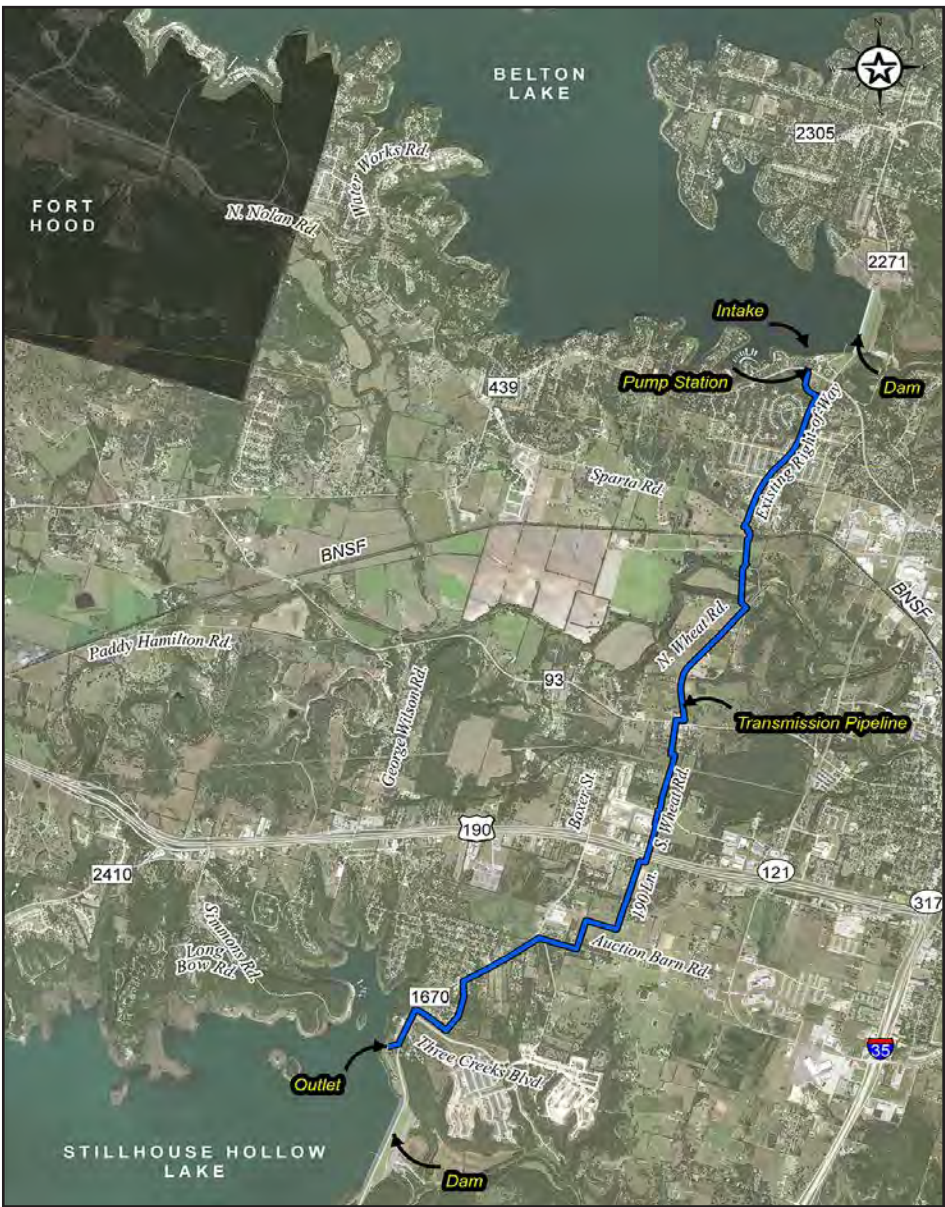
“We first started pumping in 2006, and we added multiple pumps in 2011,” Brunett said. “We have four pumps capable of pumping 42 million gallons a day. We are replacing those with four higher-capacity pumps that can move 56 million gallons per day. There will still be one pipeline, but we will be able to move more water.”

“We are currently in the pump design phase, and it will be two or three years before they are operational,” he said. Once complete, they will have the capacity to transfer about 61,000-acre-feet — 19.88 billion gallons — from Stillhouse to Georgetown annually.

The amount of water actually transferred is related directly to ongoing drought conditions.

“The pumps don’t run constantly,” Brunett said. “It all depends on the weather and how much natural runoff goes into Lake Georgetown. In 2016, the pumps didn’t run at all. But, in 2022, they ran most of the year.”

The projected Belhouse pipeline connecting Belton Lake to Stillhouse will be approximately seven miles long and up to



Courtesy graphic

Map shows route, intake pump house and output station of the Belhouse pipeline, which will move water from Belton Lake to Stillhouse Hollow. Water then could be piped from Stillhouse to Lake Georgetown to provide water to homes in Austin’s northern suburbs.

four feet in diameter.

According to Brunett, the intake structure will be located near Dead Fish Grill and the Belton Dam. The pipeline will feed into Stillhouse between the dam and Three Creeks Boulevard.

Brunett said the water lines from Belton Lake to Stillhouse and from Stillhouse to Lake Georgetown will be one-way. In other words, water cannot be pumped in reverse to transfer water into Belton Lake.

While the Brazos River Authority has deemed the pipeline solution that moves water from Belton Lake to Stillhouse, then to Lake Georgetown, as the best option for getting water to where it is needed, BRA has considered other options.

“We are always look-

ing for new water supply sources,” he said. “We have considered new reservoirs in the Little River watershed and in Milam County, but those were met with a lot of opposition from local residents so those options are no longer in our water plan.”

“All of the major rivers in Williamson and Bell Counties already have reservoirs, and there likely isn’t enough water to justify building new reservoirs on those rivers,” Brunett said. “The San Gabriel River has Lake Georgetown and Lake Granger, the Leon River has Belton Lake and Lake Proctor, and the Lampasas has Stillhouse.”

“Another option we have looked at is raising the Lake Georgetown dam so the lake could hold

more water. But, new development has gone in and that option is no longer on the table.”

According to Brunett, Belton Lake serves many water districts and municipalities. One of the largest customers is Belton-based 439 Water Supply, which provides water to Killeen, Harker Heights, Copperas Cove and parts of Fort Hood. The lake also provides water to Bluebonnet Water Supply, Belton, Coryell Water Supply, Fort Gates, Gatesville, The Grove Water Supply and others.

Although Temple pulls its water from the Leon River below the Belton Dam, water must be released from the lake to meet the City’s water needs, Burnet said.

Bell County Judge

David Blackburn said BRA contracts in place give water customers in the Georgetown area rights to water from Stillhouse.

“It is my understanding that current contracts afford the customers to our south the rights to the water,” Blackburn said. “It is also my understanding that no current system water rights holder will be impacted by a pipeline connecting Belton Lake and Stillhouse.”

The Belhouse Drought Preparedness Project — the official name of the water transport system linking Belton Lake to Stillhouse Hollow — has been planned for years to provide access to water where it is needed. It is designed to delay the need for the development of additional new sources of water, including the building of new reservoirs, which could cost millions, if not billions of dollars.

“With growth and development occurring in Bell County, I think it would be wise for Bell County water purveyors to explore strategies that will better ensure that our water needs in the future are met,” Blackburn added.

“Aquifer Storage & Recovery is but one example of a strategy that should continue to be explored in order to better ensure that the water needs of Bell County are met in the years to come,” Blackburn said.

Aquifer Storage & Recovery is the process of injecting water into the ground for storage and later recovering that water for use. One common use of ASR is for management of peak demand and raw water supply in public drinking water systems.

Temple is already launching an Aquifer Storage & Recovery system and other Bell County entities are considering following suit.



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OBITUARIES

McMichael
Elizabeth McMichael
May 29, 1945 – June 29, 2025

Elizabeth McMichael, a cherished great-grandmother, grandmother, mother, sister, and friend, passed away peacefully on June 29, 2025, in Temple, Texas, at the age of 80. Born on May 29, 1945, in Georgetown, South Carolina. Elizabeth’s life was a tapestry woven with love, laughter, and resilience.

Educated at Clara Barton High School, Elizabeth embraced life with an outspoken and kind spirit, always quick to share her humor through jokes about anything and everything. This vibrant personality endeared her to many, making her a bright light in the lives of those who had the privilege of knowing her.

As a devoted homemaker, Elizabeth took immense pride in her role as a mother and family woman, which she often considered her proudest accomplishment. Her love for her children was boundless, and she nurtured them with patience, kindness, and an ever-present warmth that made home a sanctuary. She is survived by her sons, Joseph, Raymond, Jody, and Michael McMichael, and her daughter, Clarissa Maher, who will carry her memory in their hearts forever. Additionally, she leaves behind her loving siblings, Ralph Sheppard, Latisha Bey, Clara (Raymond) Gadsden, Marilyn Sheppard, a sister in law, Louise McMichael, Geneva McMichael, a cousin whom she loved as a sister, Ernestine Sumter as well as numerous grandchildren and several great-grandchildren who filled her life with joy and laughter.

In her leisure time, Elizabeth found delight in the simple pleasures of life. Her love for playing cards, especially blackjack, 500, pittypat, and spades, created cherished memories around the table with family and friends. A fan of games of chance, she had a routine of buying scratch-off lottery tickets, often adding a playful element to family gatherings.

Although Elizabeth’s life was marked by the joy of family, she also bore the sorrow of loss. She was preceded in death by both of her parents Martha & step-father Handy, her loving husband Joseph McMichael, two beloved children, son Gregory McMichael, daughter Andrea “Angie” McMichael Stover, and a sister, Alice Fordham. Each of them left an indelible mark on her heart, and their memories will forever be a part of the legacy she created.

Elizabeth’s spirit will continue to resonate in the laughter of her children, in the embraces of her grandchildren, and in the stories shared around the family table. She taught those around her that life is a precious gift, to be enjoyed with humor and sur-

rounded by those we love. As we remember Elizabeth Sheppard McMichael, let us take solace in the lessons she imparted and the love she cultivated, holding her memory close as we navigate the journey of life without her.

In lieu of flowers please consider making a memorial donation to the funeral home to send Elizabeth home to her final resting place next to her husband in South Carolina.

Cobos
Staziana Monique Cobos
May 11, 1999 – August 13, 2025

Staziana Monique Lilia Cobos, born on May 11, 1999, in Temple, Texas, tragically passed away unexpectedly at her home on Wednesday, August 13, 2025. Staziana was a devoted mother, took immense pride in her role, continually striving to provide a loving and supportive for her two children, Romeo Carlton and Camille Lopez. Her unwavering strength and boundless love were the cornerstones of her life, and she cherished every moment spent with her family.

Graduating from Temple High School, Staziana was noted for her remarkable achievements, having been a dedicated member of the ROTC and actively participating in sports, including softball, she also loved to play ping pong, and in her younger years she played soccer and loved basketball. Her tenacity in both her education and personal life became evident as she transitioned from working in fast food restaurants to a position at Pactiv, where she contributed as a laborer to better support her family. This leap of faith illuminated her courageous spirit and commitment to her loved ones.

Staziana was known for her bubbly personality and genuinely warm nature, often described as the life of the party. She had a unique ability to light up a room with her smile and was truly gentle and kind-hearted. Her passion for music was clear, as she often found herself singing while expressing her thoughts and feelings candidly. Furthermore, her love for bright colors, especially lavender, reflected her vibrant spirit, and her home radiated the joy she exuded.

In addition to her loving nature, Staziana enjoyed playing games like Uno and chess and embraced the beautiful philosophy of “Live, Laugh, Love,” which serves as a fitting testament to how she approached life. She took great joy in creating memories, frequently stopping for hugs and kisses, ensuring she stayed connected with her family.

Staziana is survived by her partner De’Angelo Hernandez, her mother, Neomi Cobos; her father, Charles Johnson; her grandparents, her two beloved children, Romeo Carlton and Camille

Lopez; 4 brothers, Travion Johnson, Daniel Aguilar, Gregory Smith, Anthony Smith; and 7 sisters, Jaimaya, Tyshonna, Korianna Johnsons Khlorese, Denise Carrasco, Sadielynn Buttlar, Esperanza Smith, she has also aunts and uncles who all loved her dearly, her family remembers her not only as a source of strength but also as the embodiment of love and kindness.

Staziana is preceded in death by her Aunt, Victoria Aviles. While her life was cut short, her legacy of love, laughter, and determination remains in the hearts of all who knew her. Her spirit will be fondly remembered and deeply missed.

In Lieu of flowers please consider making a memorial donation to the funeral home to help defray the cost of funeral expenses. Any donations would be sincerely appreciated. You can come to the office 4235 E. US HWY 190 Temple, Texas 76501 or call 254-401-1302 or you can pay through the campaign on her obituary. Services were held privately.

A special thank you to everyone, family, friends and the community for your financial and emotional support to the family.

Arrangements are under the direction of Sabrina Young at Young’s Daughters Funeral Home and Bereavement Center in Temple, Texas.

Johnson
Alfred Weldon Johnson
August 28, 1938 – September 7, 2025

Alfred Weldon Johnson was born August 28, 1938, to the late Elder William H. Johnson and Mrs. Louvinia Johnson, in Mineral, Virginia. He was the oldest of six children. He graduated from Archie G. Richardson High school in 1956 and joined the United States Army in July 1958. In 1959 he served in Korea on the DMZ and in 1965 the Republic of Vietnam where he joined MACV Team 4 as a military advisor to the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN). Upon return from his tour-of-duty he served in various instructor and leadership roles. In 1975 he graduated from the Sergeants Major Academy, Fort Bliss, TX in Class #005. He proudly served his country in war and peace for over 30 years of honorable service, rising to the rank of Command Sergeant Major(E9) and retiring on January 31, 1988. While on active duty he earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Management from the University of Maryland in 1982. His military decorations and awards include: the Legion of Merit; Bronze Star; Meritorious Service Medal (1 st Oak Leaf Cluster); Army Commendation Medal; Army Achievement Medal; Good Conduct Medal (9 th Award); Vietnam Campaign Medal;

National Defense Service Medal; Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal (Korea); Vietnam Service Medal; Overseas Service Ribbon (3 rd Award); NCO Professional Development Ribbon; Army Service Ribbon; Vietnam Cross of Gallantry with Palm (Unit); the Combat Infantry Badge After a successful military career Alfred set out on a second career in the field of finance. He started with the Managers’ Training Program with Finance Center Federal Credit Union in Augsburg, Germany in 1988. As branch manager, he motivated his branch to consistently increase their annual revenue resulting in his being recognized and presented with an opportunity to serve as the Vice-President of Over-Seas Operations for Andrews Federal Credit Union in 1998. He served the US Military Community tirelessly until his second retirement in 2014. While in the service, he met and married Elisabeth Grimm on June 16, 1983. They lived in different locations in Germany throughout their military and civilian career, finally settling in Temple, Texas USA. Alfred was very athletic, a great friend, and the life of every party. While stationed in Germany, he led multiple military detachments on the International Four Day Marches Nijmegen (Internationale Vierdaagse Afstandsmarsen Nijmegen). These marches cover over 124 miles in four days. After retirement from

the military, he continued to successfully participate and introduce many people to the event. He completed a total of thirty-six (36) of these events. Alfred loved his family very much and every friend he made eventually became family to him. He was a very uplifting and fun person. If ever you needed a friend, a smile or a laugh he was there for you. He was also extremely helpful with guidance and mentorship for those who wanted it, Soldiers and Civilians alike.

On Sunday, September 7th, 2025, our beloved Alfred Weldon Johnson, husband, father, and grandfather quietly transitioned this life at Baylor Scott &

White White Medical Center in Temple, Texas with family by his side.

Alfred is survived by his wife Elisabeth, his two children with first wife Eleanor F. Comfort: Kelvin Johnson (wife Latia M. Johnson), Chantelle C. Shorter (husband Darryl W. Shorter). Sister: Francis Lindsey. Sisters-in-Law: Mary E. Johnson (late husband Charles E. A. Johnson), Loretta C. Johnson (late husband Marvin L. Johnson); 6 Grandchildren, and 8 nieces and nephews, other relatives, Godchildren and friends.

Alfred was predeceased by his parents Elder See **OBITS**, Page A7



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13,500 STUDENTS KICK OFF A NEW YEAR IN BELTON ISD

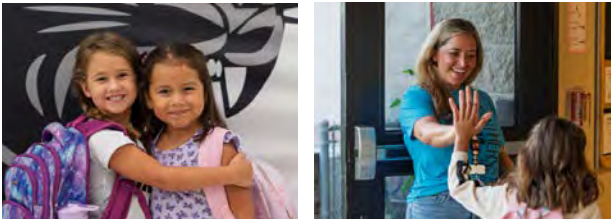
The Big Red Community came alive on August 12, 2025, as Belton ISD welcomed 13,500 students back to its 20 campuses. More than 2,000 employees greeted students from pre-K through 12th grade, setting the tone for a year of learning, growth, and new opportunities.

“The first day of school is always special, but this year the excitement is practically contagious,” said Superintendent Dr. Malinda Golden.

Staff spent the summer preparing through professional development ranging from CPR training to Google Certification, while auxiliary teams worked to beautify

campuses, facilities and grounds. The district also welcomed 143 new teachers who joined returning staff to ensure each and every student felt supported from day one.

From first-day hugs to bustling hallways, Belton ISD is off and running into a promising new school year.



NEWS AND UPDATES

PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

Parent-teacher conferences will be held districtwide on Friday, October 31. Students will have the day off.

JOIN THE BIG RED CLUB!

Belton ISD residents age 65 and older are invited to become members of the Big Red Club, which offers free admission to district athletic and fine arts events. Stop by the Administration Building at 400 North Wall Street in Belton, Monday–Thursday from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. or Friday until 4 p.m. Be sure to bring your driver’s license for verification.

PARENTS AS PARTNERS RETURNS

Belton ISD’s Parents as Partners series is back, offering a variety of events and learning opportunities for families throughout the year. Explore the full schedule and details at bisd.net/parentsaspartners.

SCAN HERE TO ACCESS THE FULL SCHEDULE AND DETAILS



Q&A WITH DR. MALINDA GOLDEN



As Belton ISD kicks off a new school year, Superintendent Dr. Malinda Golden is celebrating what matters most—students. From the joy of seeing classrooms and hallways come alive again, to the excitement of new opportunities that will shape their futures, this season is all about them. In this conversation, Dr. Golden shares her favorite first-day moments, highlights new facilities designed to support student success and outlines a vision to ensure every graduate is prepared for what’s next.

Q: What excites you most about the start of this new school year?

A: What excites me most is simply having our students back in our schools. On the first day, the smiles said it all—teachers welcoming students, friends reconnecting and everyone eager for a fresh start.

It’s always my favorite part of the year. Students walk in with so much energy about new classes and new experiences, and our staff has been working hard all summer to prepare for them. At the end of the day, students are the reason we do what we do and seeing them back in our classrooms is the greatest reminder of our purpose.



Q: What facility updates or projects are you most excited for right now?

A: I’m incredibly proud that we’re delivering on the promises made in the 2022 bond, thanks to the support of our amazing community. One project I’m especially excited about is the Delta Program facility, which will open this month.

This space has been thoughtfully designed for our students ages 18–22, giving them the support they need to build independent living and work skills. Our Delta students are so deserving, and this new facility is going to make a real difference in preparing them for the future.

Q: Looking ahead, what’s one big goal you have for the district over the next five years?

A: Our vision is clear—empowering each and every learner to pursue their dreams and enrich their communities. A key part of that vision is ensuring that 100% of our graduates leave Belton ISD future-ready.

That means every student who walks the stage will either have an industry-based certification that opens the door to a high-wage, high-demand career, or at least 30 hours of college credit to jump-start their higher education journey. Whether their next step is college, the workforce, or military service, we want our graduates to leave Belton ISD with a strong foundation and the confidence to pursue what’s next.



“GAME ON!” BELTON ISD IGNITES NEW SCHOOL YEAR WITH PEP RALLY CONVOCATION

Belton ISD kicked off the 2025-2026 school year with its annual convocation on August 8, 2025, at the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor’s Mayborn Campus Center. The pep rally-style event brought together more than 2,000 employees for a morning filled with school spirit, student showcases and celebrations of staff.

Superintendent Dr. Malinda Golden reminded staff that “our profession is the only profession to create professions,” underscoring the impact of each and every role in the district. Board President Manuel Alcozer also addressed the crowd, while highlights included the National Anthem sung by Alice J. Tarver Elementary teacher Heather Self, spirited performances from students, and the announcement of campus Teachers of the Year.

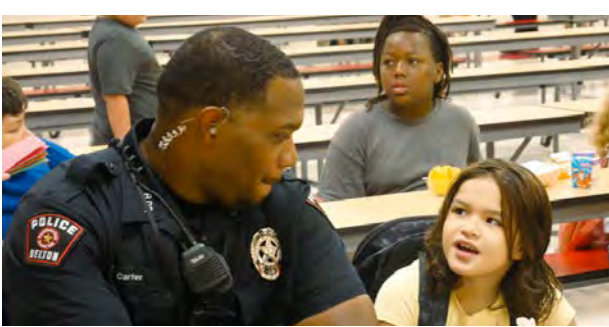
The Belton Education Foundation added excitement by raffling off three \$500 teacher grants, further fueling enthusiasm for the year ahead. The event closed with cheers, music and a united message: “Game On, Belton ISD!”



LEON HEIGHTS ELEMENTARY TO CELEBRATE 70 YEARS

Leon Heights Elementary is marking a milestone—its 70th birthday! The campus first opened in January 1956 with just six classrooms and has grown into a proud part of Belton ISD history, even earning recognition as a National Blue Ribbon School of Excellence in 2016. Notably, former Belton Mayor Wayne Carpenter once served as principal.

A community celebration is planned for mid-to-late January, with details still being finalized. Past staff, students and the Big Red Community will be invited back for a disco ball dance and refreshments in the cafeteria, all tied to a festive 70s theme in honor of the school’s big birthday year. Guests will be encouraged to join in the fun by dressing for the decade.



2025 PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS 2025

Advanced Academics

- Two National Merit Scholars
- 184 AP Scholars
- AP Honor Roll Campus - New Tech
- 3,441 college credit hours earned
- 165 Elementary National Math Star Qualifiers and 2 National Finalists
- TEA B-rating for the district 2024-2025
- TEA A-rating of 92% in Career, College and Military Readiness
- 15 TEA Academic Distinctions across 6 campuses
- Performed at or above state and regional averages in 54 of 60 STAAR tested categories

Fine Arts

- Mark of Excellence Awards - LBHS & NBMS
- UIL State Marching Contest - LBHS
- State Winter Guard Contest - BHS
- HTE (Dance) National Grand Champions - LBHS
- UIL Concert & Sight Reading Contests Sweepstakes Awards
 - HS Choir - All 11 choirs
 - HS Band - 4 of 6 bands
 - HS Orchestra - All 4 orchestras
 - MS Choir - 10 of 16 choirs
 - MS Band - 8 of 10 bands
 - MS Orchestra - 3 of 4 orchestras
- UIL Region Qualifiers
 - HS Band - 56 students
 - HS Choir - 50 students
 - HS Orchestra - 18 students
- State Qualifiers
 - TDEA All-State Dance (2)
 - TMEA All-State Orchestra (1)
 - TMEA All-State Band (2)
 - TMEA All-State Choir (2)
 - UIL State VASE (8)
 - TCDA All-State Elementary Choir (2)
 - TCDA All-State Middle School Choir (2)
 - Theatrical Design State Qualifiers (4)

Career & Technical Education (CTE)

- CTE District of Distinction
- 1089 Industry Based Certifications earned
- State Qualifiers - 134 students
 - Business Professionals of America - 24 categories
 - Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCCLA) - 4 categories
 - Health occupations Student Association (HOSA) - 12 categories
 - Skills USA - 16 categories
 - Technology Student Association - 10 categories
 - Vex Robotics - 2 categories
 - YMCA Youth and Government Judicial - 3 categories
 - FFA - advanced in five different categories
 - UIL Congressional Debate State Qualifiers (4)
- National Qualifiers
 - Business Professionals of America National Leadership Conference (1)
 - Technology Student Association National Qualifiers in Robotics (8)
 - Skills USA Automotive National Qualifier (1) - LBHS
 - Skills USA Arts/AV National Qualifier (1) - LBHS
 - HOSA International Qualifiers (3)
 - Vex Robotics World Qualifiers
 - Belton NewTech (8) - advanced in Robotics & UAV
 - National Silver Medalists Skills USA Team Works

Athletics

- 7,252 Community Service Hours
- New wrestling programs at BHS & LBHS with 14 Regional Qualifiers
- NIFF National Academic Excellence Award Finalist - LBHS Football
- 82 Academic All-State Athletes
- 10 District Championships
- 29 Team Postseason appearances
- 7 Teams Qualified for Area
- 1 Regional Qualifying Team
- 5 State Medalist
- 31 All State Athletes
- 29 Regional Qualifiers
- 27 State Qualifiers

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SEPTEMBER 2025



BELTON ISD BOND 2022 UPDATE

BELTON ISD’S NEW DELTA FACILITY OPENS FOR STUDENT USE

NEW SPACE DESIGNED TO FACILITATE HANDS-ON AND SPECIALIZED LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS TRANSITIONING TO ADULTHOOD



Belton ISD’s New Delta Facility, which opened in September

On September 2, students and staff in Belton ISD’s Delta program moved into a brand new facility made possible by the 2022 Bond. In this Q&A, Tammie Baggerly, the Delta program principal, shares more about the program and how the new facility will support student learning.

What is the Delta program, and how does it support students in Belton ISD?

The Delta program is designed to assist students in successfully transitioning from school to adulthood. It emphasizes real-world skills and independent living by:

- Community-based learning: Integrating vocational training and practical life skills within the community.

- Personalized support: Creating individualized schedules with necessary supports to facilitate the transition.
- Adult-focused structure: Implementing schedules that mimic the demands of adult life.

The Delta 18+ program extends Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) for eligible students aged 18 and older. It focuses on increasing independence by helping students develop essential skills for daily living, and providing opportunities for community-based instruction.

How does the new facility compare to your previous program location, and what are the features of the new space?

Our new 7,264-square-foot facility is a significant expansion from our previous three classrooms at Belton High School, and is designed to offer specialized learning opportunities. This dedicated space allows us to provide hands-on training in essential life skills. For example, we now have a mock apartment where young adults can practice independent living and a commercial kitchen to develop employability skills. We’re most excited about this new space because it allows us to better equip each young person with the skills they need to transition to the highest

level of independence possible.

What is a typical day like for Delta students and staff?

We personalize each day to meet the unique needs of every young adult. Schedules are customized based on the specific goals each person is working toward. Last year, our students worked 5,153 internship hours and accumulated 151 volunteer and community exploration hours. In all, we drove 16,200 miles with our young adults, getting them to job sites, volunteer work, and community events. Our new facility will allow young adults to practice skills in an environment that is truly tailored to help them succeed.

“The new Delta building is a valuable asset to the Belton ISD students. The building will allow students to continue to grow as they transition from a traditional classroom model to employment readiness. Having a kitchen and other amenities will allow students to gain valuable independence with guided instruction. These hands-on learning experiences will help students build the confidence needed to foster growth and independence.”

- Kathryn Peterson,
parent of Delta student

ALL 2022 BOND PRIMARY CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS NOW COMPLETE

The opening of the Delta facility marks the completion of all major construction projects included in the 2022 Bond, which addressed growth, safety, and aging facilities throughout Belton ISD.

During the August 2025 Belton ISD Board of Trustees meeting, Deputy Superintendent Dr. Mike Morgan provided an update on the overall status of the 2022 Bond. While Dr. Morgan has provided regular updates throughout the bond program, the August update came as the program reached its final stages. While Dr. Morgan acknowledged the Delta facility faced unanticipated delays and expressed appreciation to the community and the Board for their patience, he also expressed pride in the success of the overall program.

“At a time of rapid inflation, we will be able to say that we delivered on all of our construction projects, we will have delivered on our safety and security projects, our bus purchases, our land purchases and our mechanical/electrical and plumbing (MEP) work, as well as the delivery of student devices,” said Morgan.

Construction projects included in 2022 Bond included two new elementary schools, additions at Southwest Elementary, additions and renovations at Lake Belton Middle School and Belton High School, as well as a new agriculture facility and Delta program facility.

With the Delta facility complete, remaining projects now consist of mostly HVAC system upgrades and renovations at several campuses throughout the district. This work is expected to occur within the next four to six months, following recent Board action to approve vendors to complete the work.

Belton Board of Trustees Calls November 4, 2025 Bond

As part of Belton ISD’s continued efforts to prepare for the future while ensuring responsible stewardship of taxpayer dollars, on August 14, 2025, the Belton ISD Board of Trustees approved a \$161.8 million bond referendum to be included on the ballot in the November 4, 2025 election.

The package includes four propositions that will be on the ballot, focused on designing and maintaining safety/security, programmatic needs and replacement cycles in learning spaces district-wide.

A series of informational sessions will be held in the coming months so community members can learn more about the referendum and what is included. To learn more, visit www.bisd.net/bond2025



PROPOSITION A - \$92.9M

GENERAL

Security cameras, playground fencing, exterior lighting, HVAC, roofing; substantial updates and modernization at Sparta Elementary, Lakewood Elementary, DAEP, and Belton Middle School



PROPOSITION C - \$6M

TECHNOLOGY

Update student and staff devices



PROPOSITION B - \$43.7M

ATHLETIC STADIUMS

Construction of a competition Stadium at Lake Belton HS and updates for Tiger Field at Belton HS



PROPOSITION D - \$19.2M

SWIM CENTER UPGRADES

Additional pool space and updates to current locker rooms

SCAN FOR MORE INFORMATION ON BOND 2025

www.bisd.net/bond2025



THANK YOU, BIG RED COMMUNITY!

With your support, Belton ISD has been able to deliver on the following projects included in the 2022 Bond!

GROWTH AND CAPACITY PROJECTS

- ✓ James L. Burrell Elementary
- ✓ Hubbard Branch Elementary
- ✓ Southwest Elementary Addition
- ✓ Belton ISD Ag Facility
- ✓ Land for Future Use

SAFETY AND SECURITY PROJECTS

- ✓ Security Vestibules
- ✓ Exterior Lighting Upgrades
- ✓ Access Control and Security Cameras
- ✓ Shatter-Resistant Film
- ✓ Water Refill Stations and Fountains
- ✓ Playground Safety and Accessibility Upgrades

AGING AND EQUITABLE FACILITIES

- ✓ Construction of Delta Program Facility
- ✓ Belton High School CTE Addition & CTE Renovations/Upgrades
- ✓ Belton High School Fine Arts Addition
- ✓ Belton High School Interior Finishes
- ✓ Lake Belton Middle School Athletics Spaces
- ✓ Lake Belton Middle School Fine Arts Expansion
- ✓ Belton New Tech @Waskow CTE/Fine Arts improvements *Due to timing of this project, bond funds were not used

TRANSPORTATION AND TECHNOLOGY

- ✓ 30 new buses purchased, with another purchase planned
- ✓ New Student Devices
- ✓ Technology Infrastructure

VIDEO FEATURE

Thank you for investing in the Journey!

Since the passage of the 2022 Bond, Belton ISD has been hard at work to make the promised projects a reality. To see and hear how your investment in the journey is impacting students and staff, we invite you to watch a short video produced by the Belton ISD Communications

team. This video features the voices of our students and staff – who are now benefiting from the projects *you* made possible

scan here to watch the video!



Belton ISD
BOND 2022

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A6
Thursday,
September 25, 2025

LIFESTYLES

THE BELTON JOURNAL

CeltFest: Faith, froth, and fellowship in Central Texas



Arts and crafts activities will be part of the upcoming CeltFest.

Courtesy photo

Special to the Journal

Celtic spirit will meet Texas heart this fall as the Central Texas Celtic Spiritual Community hosts CeltFest, a free, three-day celebration of music, heritage, and spirituality running October 3–5 in Belton and Salado.

The festival’s theme Faith, Froth, and Fellowship reflects its blend of spiritual exploration, joyful gathering, and community support.

At the center of CeltFest is a series of talks by author Kenneth McIntosh, who has shared Celtic spirituality with audiences across Ireland, the UK, and the United States. McIntosh will speak at the Salado Museum and at First Presbyterian Church of Belton, where a special Saturday lecture includes a free community lunch. His books will also be available for purchase throughout the weekend, and attendees will have the opportunity to have copies signed by the author.

On Friday evening, the festival shifts to the lively beer garden at Barrow Brewing Company in Salado, where the kilted athletes of the Dainty Brutes will demonstrate the strength and skill of traditional Highland Games. The evening continues with Celtic folk-rock from

Austin’s The Yokes, whose pub songs and sea shanties are sure to have the crowd singing along.

Families can join in simple crafts, such as weaving St. Brigid’s Crosses, while enjoying food truck favorites and craft beer brewed in the heart of the “Scottish Capital of Texas.”

Saturday morning offers a quieter, contemplative moment at Miller Springs Nature Center in Belton, where the community will gather for Forest Church, outdoor worship held under the canopy of trees paired with a Blessing of the Animals. Participants are invited to bring their pets, reflect on the sacredness of creation, and enjoy a walk in nature.

CeltFest also carries a spirit of giving. Festival t-shirts featuring original artwork by community member Jessica Doree will be available for purchase, with proceeds benefiting the Body of Christ Community Clinic, a nonprofit providing free healthcare to Central Texans in need.

All events are free and open to the public. For the full schedule and to learn more about the Central Texas Celtic Spiritual Community, visit centexcelticspirit.com.

First Baptist’s new church building expected in early 2027

By David Stone
The Belton Journal

The new \$25-million First Baptist Church of Belton is expected to be complete in the first quarter of 2027, Executive Pastor Mike Morrow said this week.

“I’m hoping we will be in the new facility in time for Easter services in 2027.”

Ground was broken for the new church — located at 1308 W MLK Jr Avenue — in May and site work began at the first of August. Land for the new building was acquired through a land swap with the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor. The university likely will replace the current First Baptist with buildings needed for continued growth.

“The general contractor estimates that construction will take about 18 months to complete,” Morrow said.

“The overall size of the new building will actually be smaller than the total square footage of our current church building,” he added. “But, we will have a larger sanctuary.”

Morrow said the current church is about



Courtesy graphic

An architect’s rendition shows the exterior of the new First Baptist Church in Belton.

110,000 square feet and the sanctuary seats 1,000 people. The new facility will be just over half the size — 66,000 square feet. The sanctuary, however, will seat approximately 1,300.

“It’s a reorganization of space,” he said. “We will have some amenities the current church doesn’t have.”

Included in the future First Baptist is a large gathering space that

stretches the entire length of the building.

“The gathering space will be a significant portion of the total square feet,” he said. “It will include our welcome center, a coffee shop and space for gatherings. We have a lobby in our current church, but nothing this large.”

“The new building will include 28 Sunday school rooms — 12 adult rooms and 16 for children

and youth,” Morrow said. “We also will have a large gymnasium and administrative offices.”

“The gym will house a full basketball court and three pickleball courts,” he added. “It will be used for recreation, but we can also set up for banquets in the gym.”

The new church is being constructed by S-B Construction Group of Indiana.

“They specialize in commercial work,” Morrow said. “They have an entire division dedicated to building churches and Christian schools.”

“The new building has been a heartbeat for First Baptist for several years — it started before I was here,” he said. “The church did extensive research to determine if the current facilities could be renovated or if a new building was

needed.”

The research revealed that renovation costs could top \$32 million, so a land swap was engineered with UMHB.

The new facility was designed by Utah-based Building God’s Way.

“This is an exciting time for First Baptist Church,” Morrow concluded. “We are looking forward to the new church.”

EXPO - From Page A1

it without our volunteers, sponsors, and all the vendors that spread the word about how wonderful an event it is.”

Jennifer Danko of Heritage Funeral Home urged people to attend next year’s event, saying “everybody that was com-

ing out as I was coming in was smiling, everybody was just so friendly and in a good mood. They need to come next year because they missed out.”

The 16th Annual Bell County Senior Expo will be held

on September 22, 2026, once again at the Cadence Bank Center(Bell County Expo). In addition, a new event will be held on March 17, 2026. The Inaugural Heart of Texas Senior Expo will be held at the Extraco Events Center in Waco.

Council - From Page A1

inspire the next generation of manufacturers.

According to this proclamation, “manufacturing fuels innovation, generates employment and strengthens the US economy and communities such as Belton.”

“It is essential to showcase advanced manufacturing processes, automation, skilled careers and STEM education to students, educators, parents and civic leaders in Belton.”

Many local manufacturing representatives were at Tuesday’s meeting and were recognized.

Also Tuesday night, the council nominated a candidate for the Bell County Tax Appraisal Board of Directors and an appointment to the Bell County Public Health District Board.

City Clerk Amy M Casey said the Tax Appraisal Board is

made up of three elected directors, five directors appointed by entities and the elected tax assessor/collector.

“Each year, the entities will be electing either two or three of the board members,” she said in a statement to the Council.

“Each entity will nominate up to two candidates, and once the Appraisal District receives all nominations, they will produce a ballot and send it to all entities. Belton will have 37 votes based on the total tax levy.”

“Since we are a smaller entity, the mayor is recommending the nomination of just one person and placing all our votes on this person,” Casey said.

Todd Scott will be Belton’s nominee for the Tax Appraisal District Board of Directors.

The Council also appointed Cathy Fox to the Bell County Public Health District Board of Directors.

According to Casey, Charla Peters replaced Wayne Carpenter on the board in January 2023 — her term expires Oct. 16 and she did not desire reappointment. Dan Kirkley had served as the alternate to the board, and he did not desire appointment to the vacant regular member position created by Peters’ departure.

Leigh recommended Fox to the three-year term. She currently serves as Councilmember Stephanie O’Banion’s representative on the Ethics Commission. Her replacement on the Ethics board will be appointed at a future council meeting.

Obits - From Page A3

William H. and Mrs. Louvinia Johnson, his brothers William H. Johnson Jr., Marvin L. Johnson, Charles E. A. Johnson, and Calvin Johnson, and his son Anthony Johnson. Alfred leaves behind nothing but beautiful fond memories of love, laughter, and life.

A graveside service will take place at 1p.m. on Tuesday October 28, 2025. His body will be interred at Arlington National Cemetery, in Virginia. The Johnson Family would like to extend their sincere gratitude for all the thoughtful expressions of sympathy, love, and concern shown during this time of bereavement. Your prayers, calls, visits and acts of kindness are greatly appreciated and will be forever remembered. We Pray God’s Blessings Upon Each of You!

Arrangements are made under the direction of Sabrina Young at Young’s Daughters Funeral Home and Bereavement Center in Temple, Texas.

Bachofer

Barbara Marie Bachhofer
December 5, 1961 –
September 7, 2025

Barbara Marie Bachhofer, affectionately known as “Barbie,” was born on December 5, 1961, in Temple, Texas. On Sunday, September 7, 2025, she left this world at 63 years old, with her daughter

Shannon holding her hand.

Barbie was a vibrant and friendly spirit, she always made everyone feel welcomed and loved in her presence.

At the age of 15, Barbie met the love of her life, Anthony “Tony” Allen Bachhofer, while walking through the Temple mall with some friends. She knew right away that she would marry him. Their love grew into a marriage that spans over 47 years. Barbie and Tony started a family together, proudly raising two daughters. They shared many happy moments, enjoying activities such as country dancing, bowling and playing darts. In their free time, they loved outdoor adventures, including fishing, boating and camping. Barbie and Tony participated in local BBQ cook-offs, under the name “Fire-N-Da-Ho”, where Barbie won multiple trophies for her Baked Beans.

Barbie was predeceased by her father, Marion Wayne McEntire Sr., and one brother, Wayne McEntire Jr. She leaves behind a loving family who will cherish her memory. She is survived by her mother, Helen Tausch; her devoted husband, Anthony “Tony” Allen Bachhofer; two daughters, Shannon Crissy and her wife Angela Crissy, and Stephanie Ross; one brother, Larry McEntire and his wife Donna; two sisters, Susan Northam and her husband Doug, and Terri Manning and her husband John; and a grandchild, Phoe-

nix Ross.

Barbie’s life was characterized by her unwavering support for her family and her deep affection for her husband. She will be remembered for her strong personality, unwavering spirit, and the warmth she brought to all who knew her. It is a bitter-sweet farewell to a beloved wife, mother, and friend who touched the lives of many. Barbie will be missed dearly but her legacy of love and strength will continue to resonate through her family and friends.

The family appreciates your love and support during this difficult time. If you wish to honor Barbie, memorial contributions to help with expenses can be made to the Venmo account: @ShannRuth

Arrangements are made under the direction of Sabrina Young at Young’s Daughters Funeral Home and Bereavement Center in Temple, Texas.

Ward

Holly Ann Harris Ward
August 15, 1970 –
September 18, 2025

Holly Ann Harris Ward of McGregor, TX passed away on September 18, 2025, in Temple, TX.

A Memorial Service will be at 11 a.m., on Thursday, September 25, 2025, at Dossman Funeral Home, Belton Texas.

Holly was born on August 16, 1970,

in Waco, TX to Bobby and Patty Langbein Harris.

Holly graduated with a Master of Art Degree from Texas A&M University Central Texas. She was employed by the Texas Department of Health and Human Services. She was a loving wife, mother, daughter, sister and aunt. Holly enjoyed decorating, gardening, and watching movies. She especially liked the Twilight and Harry Potter franchises. Jewelry, plants and her cats brought Holly great happiness.

Holly valued time spent with her family cooking, going camping and especially enjoying the holiday season.

Holly married Christopher Ward in Denton, TX on May 22nd, 2003. She is survived by her husband Christopher; mother Patty Harris; sons, Luther “Lee” Barrick IV of Waco, TX and Matthew Barrick of El Paso, TX; daughters, McKynna Ward of McGregor, TX, Chrysann Ward of College Station, TX and Rhyanne Ward of McGregor, TX; sisters, Aimee Harris-Johnson and husband, Bill Fling, Jaimee Rice and husband, Barry and Micalyn Wilson; brother, Robert Harris. Holly is also survived by her mother-in-law, Janet Ward; sister-in-law, Leigh Schmidt; 10 nieces and nephews, as well as a host of friends and co-workers.

Holly was preceded in death by her father, James Robert “Bobby” Harris.

Belton Area Chamber kicks off Leadership Belton Class of 2026

Special to the Journal

The Belton Area Chamber of Commerce kicked off the 2025-2026 Leadership Belton program on Thursday, September 18 with a full day of activities at Variety’s Peaceable Kingdom Retreat. In addition to team building activities led by Peaceable Kingdom staff, participants gained insight into their leadership styles and needs through self-assessment, discussion and guidance provided by Jim Crothers, certified John Maxwell Coach and Trainer with Life Together Coaching.

Leadership Belton is a 10-month program sponsored by the Belton Area Chamber of Commerce focusing on three key elements: community awareness training, leadership training, and team building. The program provides opportunities for participants to learn about and engage in the community through site visits, meetings and presentations with community leaders, and working on project teams.

“Leadership Belton has been an exceptional experience for our past participants, and we expect this year to be another great experience,” stated Randy Pittenger, Belton Area Chamber President/CEO. “We have a wonderful group of participants, representing a variety of businesses and resources in our community.”

“We are especially thankful for the investment the sponsoring organizations have made to provide this leadership development opportunity,” added Pittenger. “The opportunities to learn and grow through this program are significant for each participant, and our community benefits as well.”

Members of the Leadership Belton Class of 2026 are:

Clinton Bailey owner of the Deployment Supply Store;

John Ciaburri, Owner/Creative Director of Ciaburri Brand;

Eric Flores, Relationship Banker for Extraco Banks in Belton;

Kosheryl Fulghum, VP/Banking Center Manager for First Texas Bank;

Adam Fulton, Insurance Agent for Finney Insurance;

Kevin Hisel, Comfort Advisor for Dr. Watts Heating and Air;

Ed Kovaleski, Onshore Delivery Center Lead for CGI Belton;

Bob Massey, Founder/Owner of Hybrid Leadership Group;

Yolanda Ortiz, Branch Operations Manager for Alliance Bank Central Texas;

Dani Patterson, Educational Technology Consultant for Topsarge Business Solutions;

Lorenzo Reyes, Vice President Development and External Relations for Temple College;

Becky Tschoerner, VP Relationship Manager for Cadence Bank;

Amanda Villanueva, Director of Marketing and Team Development for First Community Title; and Kristie Whites, Owner and Tea Guide for Ruby Tea Room.

Participants are selected through an application process and meet monthly with a specific focus for each session. The first session focuses on leadership skills and



Courtesy photo

Members of the Leadership Belton class of 2026 have begun the 10-month program which wraps up next year.

team building, with other sessions focusing on Social Services, Education (public, private, and post-secondary), Healthcare, Economic Development, City and County Government, State Government, Quality of Life/Recreation, and the Military (Fort Hood). Visits to key locations around the Belton area for a behind-the-scenes look at the operations of various businesses and organizations include opportunities to meet with a variety of community leaders.

Another significant element of the program is the team building component. The class was divided into two groups and asked to select a project within our community that will have lasting impact. Each group will be assigned a mentor/board liaison to assist in the project planning and implementation process. Belton Area Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors Rhonda Eggleston and Meredith Duke will serve as Project Team Mentors/Board Liaison. These projects become a source of pride for the members, as well as an opportunity to contribute to the betterment of the community.

For more information about Leadership Belton, other programs, or membership in the Belton Area Chamber of Commerce, visit the website at www.beltonchamber.com, call 254-939-3551, or email info@beltonchamber.com.

Belton Parks & Rec offering fall classes for kids with special needs

By Michele Weisman
The Belton Journal

Belton Parks and Recreation is partnering with a pediatric occupational therapist, bringing new sensory activities to children with special needs. Classes are held at the Harris Community Center, designed for family participation, including parents and siblings.

These brand-new classes were created with the whole family in mind. Each class

is taught by a pediatric OT, using sensory-friendly materials and activities.

Adam Trujillo, the recreation superintendent for the City of Belton, said, “Parents and siblings are welcome to enjoy it together.”

The model of small class sizes taught by a private instructor may include assistants should the class size warrant it.

Trujillo explained one main instructor will lead the classes and add assistants depending on class size.

Belton Parks and Recreation is offering three classes for children ages five to eleven. The classes are: Inclusive Movement at 9:30 to 10 a.m., followed by Sensory Art and Music at 10 to 10:30 a.m., ending with Handwriting Hullahaloo at 10:45 to 11:30 a.m. There is a short break between the second and third classes.

The Fall class schedule is on Mondays from Oct. 13 through Nov. 10 at the Harris Community Center located at 401 N. Alexan-

der St.

This could be an all-morning event for your family should you sign up for all three classes.

Trujillo said, “As with all classes, it will be postponed if not enough participants sign up.”

Visit www.beltontexas.gov/departments/parks_and_recreation/recreation to sign up or see the flyer. You can also email awells@beltontexas.gov for more information.

DAR - From Page A1

District 54, and Hillary Hickland, State Representative, District 55, presented a Resolution for Bells Across America, signed by both State Representatives.

A member of DAR, Sandra Jones, attended the event “so I can secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and

our prosperity, which is in the Constitution...I love this country.”

In 1955, DAR petitioned for the national observance of Constitution Week to occur annually from Sept 17–23. President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed the resolution on

August 2, 1956.

The Betty Martin Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution will continue the tradition of “Bells Across America” at the Bell County Courthouse. You can find out more about DAR at www.dar.org.

Purple Star - From Page A1

partners with the Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC) to address the academic, emotional and social challenges that come with a military lifestyle, ensuring comprehensive support for military-connected students.

Dr. Cassandra Spearman, Belton ISD Assistant Superintendent of Operations, shared, “Being recognized as Purple Star Designated Campuses highlights the care and dedication our staff and students put into supporting our military-connected families. We know how important it is to make transitions as seamless as possible, and we are honored to be part of their journey.”

Ashlie Thomas, Principal of Charter Oak Elementary, added, “Our campus is proud to be a place where military-connected students feel immediately

at home. Whether it’s welcoming new families, celebrating military service, or connecting students with peers through our ambassador program, we want every child to know they belong here. Receiving the Purple Star designation is a reflection of the heart our staff and students put into serving those who serve our country.”

Christy Fatula, Charter Oak Elementary School Counselor and Military Liaison, said, “Within the past year we held our first Veterans Day Program, launched Military Circle Support Groups, and, most importantly, created the COMMS Team. Named by our active-duty student leaders who went through ambassador training, the Charter Oak Military Mission Squadron welcomes every new student with tours, lunch buddies, recess play and fun details like which

water fountain is the coldest or the best days to buy lunch. This peer-to-peer connection eases transitions and helps students feel at home right away.

The COMMS Team also plans monthly events for military families, with the favorite being our Students versus Parents Kickball Game during the Month of the Military Child. As an active-duty spouse myself, serving as Military Liaison has been the most rewarding gift — watching our students give back to Charter Oak’s bravest heroes, our military kids.”

This recognition further solidifies Belton ISD’s role as a district that honors and respects the sacrifices made by military families, ensuring their children are cared for and supported in their educational journey, no matter where they may be stationed.



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The World I Knew, the World We’ve Become



John C. Perry

Do you ever feel like the culture has passed you by? Like you’ve lived too long in a world that no longer resembles the one you grew up in? Ever take a pop culture quiz and realize you can’t answer a single question correctly?

I’m in my late 70s now, which means I was a child in the 1950s and a teenager in the 1960s. The world I knew then feels almost foreign today. Yes, technology has exploded, every decade seems to bring another leap forward. But that’s not what I want to talk about. What weighs on my heart is something deeper: what I perceive as the degeneration of American culture.

When I was a kid, we prayed in school. We saluted the flag with pride. We respected our elders. And when we disagreed, we tried to talk things

through, compromise wasn’t a dirty word.

Today, those basic norms feel like relics. I recently came across a study from Rutgers University, in partnership with the Network Contagion Research Institute, that left me stunned. It described what they call an “assassination culture” emerging in the United States, a disturbing trend where political violence is not only more common but increasingly justified by segments of the population. According to the report, 56% of people left of center said there was justification for the murder of President Trump. Even 20.3% of people right of center agreed.

And then came the assassination of Charlie Kirk. I was flabbergasted, not just by the tragedy itself, but by the reaction. So many people either celebrated his death or claimed he got what he deserved. On Bluesky, a social media platform predominantly used by those on the political left, moderators had to issue warnings after a wave of posts expressing joy or indifference over Charlie’s murder. They reminded users that such posts violated their Community Guidelines.

Charlie was a man. A husband. A father of two young children. Forget his politics. Forget his religion. How could any sane person relish in his death?

How did we get here?

There are likely as many theories as there are readers of this column. As a man of faith, I wonder if the seeds were sown when we removed prayer from schools. In my lifetime, I’ve watched a dramatic shift toward secularism, in our classrooms, in our public life, even in some churches that have drifted from centuries-old doctrine.

Maybe I’ve just lived too long. Although I love the technology advances, it deeply saddens me to see the decline of our American culture.

My hope, for this country, for my grandchildren, that we turn back to faith. That we rediscover the values that once held us together. I pray that Charlie Kirk’s death might spark a revival of belief, a renewal of conscience, a return to grace.

We need to get on our knees. We need to pray for our country. Pray for civility and for peace. And pray that a spiritual awakening will sweep across this land once again.

John C. Perry is the Lay Leader with New Life Methodist Church. They meet every Sunday at 9 a.m. (Bible Study) and 10 a.m. (Worship Service) in the Salado Middle School at 1169 Williams Rd.



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EDITORIAL

Teeth Brushes

Pleasant Ramblings • Mark Magnan

Is it tooth brushes, or teeth brush?

I have given my opinion on some of the greatest inventions of all time in the past. Before I get into the main topic of my column today, let me go over a few previous ideas. I firmly think the greatest invention of all times is hot running water. Not just running water, but hot running water. You can get running water by living next to a stream, which doesn't sound that bad. However hot running water is amazing, it enables us to wash dishes easily, and most of all it lets us enjoy a nice shower. Some folks might argue that electricity in their homes is more useful. So that we can, uh, have internet and charge our cell phones, nope, hot running water is way better.

Now, don't get me wrong. There are a lot of things that make

our lives so much better and I miss them when something happens and I don't have that for a few minutes, or hours, or days. Yes, electricity is amazing as well. How else would we have air conditioning in Texas in the summer?

Speaking of electricity, I bring up the electric toothbrush. I think this is a very important invention. When I was young, we were taught in school the proper way to brush your teeth. You brush up and down because that gets food out from between your teeth. The problem is that it is very hard to do on any tooth other than the ones right in front. It is very difficult to do as you move further back in your mouth. And near impossible if you have to switch hands for some reason. We were given a new tooth brush each year, and then we had to chew a little pill. This pill

actually showed what a good or poor job of brushing you did the last time you brushed your teeth.

What the electric toothbrush did was move the brush in a fairly correct motion for brushing your teeth, so it was a big help to youngsters everywhere. My generation was told to brush your teeth aggressively. We had a manual timer that gave you a specific length of time that you were to abuse your teeth and gums to be effective. The electric toothbrush did a much better job and was easier to use. I remember both a plug in model, which seemed like a bad idea around running water. Then there was a battery powered edition, it was heavy and required battery changes every few weeks.

Technology has kept up with teeth, or tooth, care. I have had a variety of teeth brushes in the past

few years. One connected to your phone, it timed where you were brushing, let you know if you were too rough, and overall how good of a job you did. Another has a few selections on different types of activity in your mouth, brushing your teeth is just one of those. I think the basic operations are the best, just up and down like I was taught some years (maybe not as many as you might think) ago.

One of the things that would influence brushing as much as anything else is toothpaste. Why can't we have a toothpaste that tastes good? I don't like peppermint and I certainly don't want something burning my mouth as I brush, I am more likely to spit that out early.

I have always valued my teeth, that was expressed to me at an early age. I have tried to do well

and not create any problems that will haunt me as I get older. So far I have been quite successful. It also makes routine cleanings at the dental office a lot more pleasant. Instead of having a stranger's hands in your mouth for a couple of hours you can get done a lot quicker, get your bag of goodies and be on your way. I don't care if it was Elvira leaning over me doing my cleaning, I am just not a fan of having excessive fingers in my mouth if not needed.

A good tasting toothpaste and an easy to use powered toothbrush would be a good method for taking care of the set of teeth you rely on everyday. A good old fashioned manual toothbrush works well too, you just have a bit more effort. I hope everyone has a good week and remembers to floss as well.

Thank God for Shoes

Coffee Talk • Renae Brumbaugh Green

Anyone who knows me well knows I'm obsessed with shoes.

I gave up the sexy, spike-heeled footwear decades ago. But my heart still races when I see a new pair of loafers. My eyes to turn to hearts when I try on a great pair of sneakers. It's a weakness. I own it.

That's why, a few years ago, it took a new pair of shoes to pull me out of one of the darkest places of my life. It was one of those seasons when almost everything that could go wrong did. I won't go into detail, but we've all

had those times. Instead of bucking up and facing the issues head-on, I sunk into a miry quicksand of depression and couldn't get out. It wasn't a place I wanted to stay, but with quicksand and depression, escape can be tricky.

I tried to eat healthy. It didn't help.

I exercised. Didn't help.

I prayed, wrote in my journal, took long bubble baths. The gauge didn't move.

One day, I remembered reading about the important role gratitude plays in our

mental health. I figured, why not? I'll start a list of things I'm grateful for.

Now here's the thing about depression. It messes with your mind, and you view everything through a fog. So when I tried to sift through my life to find things I was thankful for, I came up short. I was *that* sad. I couldn't think of a single thing.

So I argued with myself. I told myself to find just one item—no matter how small—that I was thankful for. At that moment, my eyes landed on my shoes—a spiffy new

pair of brown loafers I'd bought for work. They were the perfect blend of comfort and style, and they still had that new-leather sheen on them. I can't say they filled my heart with joy... they didn't. But I was able to mumble, without much enthusiasm, "I'm thankful for my shoes."

Looking back at that day, from a healthy mindset, I realize how ridiculous it was that my shoes were the only thing I could think of for my gratitude list. I have an amazing husband, fantastic kids, a beautiful home, the goofiest dogs

you've ever met... the list is unending. But in that moment, my shoes were the best I could do.

But then something happened. Focusing on those shoes made me realize I was grateful for my job. That job allowed me to buy new shoes when I needed them. It also ensured I could pay for groceries, gas for my car, and internet service. I remembered how fortunate I was to have a comfortable, reliable car, which led me to recall all the great places I'd been in that car, to meet friends for lunch or see re-

ally cool things. Before long, I had to put the list on hold because it was getting too lengthy, and I had other things to do.

It took a lot of mental muscle to heft my mind from depression to gratitude, but I made that first effort. As wimpy as "shoes" sound on a gratitude list, it was all I could do at the time. And it turns out, it was enough.

"Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."
1 Thessalonians 5:1

Belton Parks & Rec offering fall classes for kids with special needs

By Michele Weisman
The Belton Journal

Belton Parks and Recreation is partnering with a pediatric occupational therapist, bringing new sensory activities to children with special needs. Classes are held at the Harris Community Center, designed for family participation, including parents and siblings.

These brand-new classes were created with the whole family in mind. Each class is taught by a pediatric OT, using sensory-friendly materials and activities.

Adam Trujillo, the recreation superintendent for the

City of Belton, said, "Parents and siblings are welcome to enjoy it together."

The model of small class sizes taught by a private instructor may include assistants should the class size warrant it.

Trujillo explained one main instructor will lead the classes and add assistants depending on class size.

Belton Parks and Recreation is offering three classes for children ages five to eleven. The classes are: Inclusive Movement at 9:30 to 10 a.m., followed by Sensory Art and Music at 10 to 10:30 a.m., ending with Handwriting Hullabaloo at 10:45 to 11:30

a.m. There is a short break between the second and third classes.

The Fall class schedule is on Mondays from Oct. 13 through Nov. 10 at the Harris Community Center located at 401 N. Alexander St.

This could be an all-morning event for your family should you sign up for all three classes.

Trujillo said, "As with all classes, it will be postponed if not enough participants sign up."

Visit www.beltontexas.gov/departments/parks_and_recreation/recreation to sign up or see the flyer. You can also email [awells@belton-](mailto:awells@belton-texas.gov)

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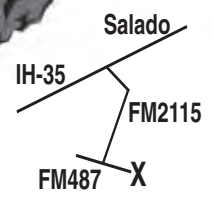
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Get ready for a porktacular time at the 9th Annual Belton’s Bacon, Blues, and Brews Festival

Special to the Journal

Mark your calendars—Belton’s Bacon, Blues, and Brews Festival (B4 Fest, for short) is back this September 26–27!

Every year on the last Friday and Saturday of September, downtown Belton transforms into hog heaven with live blues music, cold craft brews, and bacon-inspired dishes. It’s two days packed with family-friendly fun that’ll make you squeal with delight!

B4 Fest began in 2017 with one big goal: to encourage more people to see our charming downtown Belton and enjoy the retail and restaurants. This event also opened the doors to peoples interest in the empty buildings and led to more development downtown. The City of Belton wanted to create something fun, family-oriented, and unique, something that wouldn’t conflict with nearby events. People love bacon and brews. Most people love the blues, and Everybody loves Belton. Thus, Belton’s Bacon, Blues, and Brews Festival was born!

On Friday and Saturday, local breweries and wineries line the streets to showcase unique brews for guests to en-

joy while sampling delicious cuisine and listening to electrifying blues music.

Every festival, we bring in talented blues musicians—from original artists to cover bands paying homage to famous icons. The 1st Cavalry Band will kick off the event on Friday and Saturday. Back again this year are Jay White and the Blues Commanders and The Damn Torpedoes (A Tom Petty Tribute Band). Texas Flood, a crowd favorite, is returning to Belton to make a splash before they go on their big tour! And Lone Star Skynyrd (A Lynyrd Skynyrd Tribute Band) is also joining the lineup!

One of the highlights of the festival is the Bacon-Inspired Dish Competition, where local food trucks use 10 pounds of bacon donated by H-E-B Plus to create unique dishes. They compete for cash prizes—Grand Prize, Runner-Up, and the People’s Choice Award. The judges for the first two categories include local chefs, restaurant owners, and bacon aficionados, while attendees vote for their favorite in the People’s Choice category. What started as a cook-off between individuals and teams



Courtesy photo/Gary Knight
At last year’s B4 event, one of the band’s lead singers engaged with the crowd, and 91-year-old Marjorie Knight joined the fun. She plans to attend again this year.

has evolved into a competition between local food trucks, showcasing some of the best local flavors Belton businesses have to offer.

As the festival has grown, so has the fun—2024 saw the addition of craft vendors and a pig-calling contest, both of which are here to stay. This year, we plan to add Bacon Bingo to the festivities and hope to continue growing from there!

For more details, lodging info, and everything you need to plan your visit, go to SeeBelton.com.

Entertainment Schedule

Friday, Sept. 26

- 1st Cavalry Division Band - 5:30 pm - 7:00 pm
- Breweries, Wineries, & Food Vendors: 5:30 PM – 10:00 PM
- Texas Flood (Live Blues): 7:00 PM – 10:00 PM

Saturday, Sept. 27

- B4 Market Opens: 11:00 AM – 10:00 PM
- 1st Cavalry Division Band - 11:00 am - 1:00pm
- Bacon-Inspired Food Truck Competition:

- 11:00 AM – 1:00 PM
- Jay White and the Blues Commanders: 1:00 PM – 3:30 PM
- Youth Pig Calling Contest (Ages 12 & Under): 2:00 PM – 2:30 PM
- Lone Star Skynyrd (Lynyrd Skynyrd Tribute): 4:00 PM – 7:00 PM
- Awards Ceremony: 5:15 PM – 5:45 PM
- Adult Pig Calling Contest (Ages 13 & Up): 7:00 PM – 7:30 PM
- The Damn Torpedoes (Tom Petty Tribute): 7:30 PM – 10:00 PM

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SAT. SEPT 27: 10:00 AM – 10:00 PM

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Texas Flood



Jay White



The Damn Torpedoes

ENTERTAINMENT SCHEDULE

FRI. SEPT. 26

Texas Flood
Breweries & Wineries
Food Vendors

SAT. SEPT. 27

B4 Market
Food Truck Competition with Bacon Inspired Dishes
Jay White and the Blues Commanders
Pig Calling Contest for Youth (Ages 12 and Under)
Pig Calling Contest for Adults (Ages 13 and Up) & Awards
The Damn Torpedoes - Tom Petty Tribute Band



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Belton vs. Lake Belton caps big week in BISD Volleyball

By **Tony Adams**
The Belton Journal

The momentum and build-up of Tuesday’s Belton Tigers and Lake Belton Broncos volleyball contest started with Friday night non-district matchups for each team.

Tiger Gym was the setting for Belton’s Friday evening matchup against the West Trojans.

The Tigers got off the mark quickly and scored a decisive victory over the Trojans.

Scores of the match were 25-10, 25-19, and 25-18.

Lake Belton made a road trip on Friday to Pflugerville to take on an extremely tough Weiss Wolves squad for the second time this season.

The Broncos played the Wolves tough in three of the four games. However, Weiss came away with a hard-fought 3-1 win.

Scores of the match were 25-21, 25-10, 26-28, and 25-21.

The matchups led up to the District 16-5A opener for the Belton ISD teams.

Belton made life tough on Lake Belton in the early going of each game. However, the Broncos were able to take leads by the middle stages of each set and defeat the Tigers 3-0.



Scores of the contest were 25-13, 25-18, and 25-19.

After Abbi Jones earned Lake’s first point with a kill, the Tigers answered with kills by CJ Stites and Emma Harvey to propel Belton on a 7-2 run and give Big Red a 7-3 advantage.

The Broncos used a 5-1 sprint to tie the game at 8-8 and subsequently used crisp passing to notch a 17-5 stretch to take the first set by 12. Jones, Kaitlyn Hutchins, Madi Bingham, Ava Wood, and Morgan Kukulski all had kills in the stretch for Lake.

Landry Duggan’s kill and Kaitlyn McCracken’s kill helped give Belton early momentum in game two. However, the Broncos never trailed in the second game, as their constant pressure and consistency was the key. Lake opened eight-point lead on two different occasions before winning the second game by seven.

The teams traded the lead twice in the final game. Hutchins and Kukulski traded kills early, and Harvey added a kill and Emma Tucek’s ace pulled the Tigers even at 4-4.

Hutchins provided a kill that was answered by a Lyza LeBlanc block.

With score knotted at 11-11, a diving dig by Keileigh Krueger electrified the Broncos side, and Lake led the rest of the way with a 14-8 closing stretch.

“I was really proud how spread out our offense was,” Lake Belton head coach Allison Waits said. “Everybody contributed offensively, and everybody contributed defensively. With the film that we watched, we knew what to set up offensively, and

Lake Belton moved to 19-13 overall and 1-0 in Dis-

See **VOLLEYBALL**,
Page B4



Tigers to travel to Cuero for final tuneup before district

By **Clay Whittington**
The Belton Journal

The Tigers will be tested once again.

On the heels of a pair of lopsided defeats, Belton hits the road Friday, traveling 150 miles for its final nondistrict contest, and when the Tigers arrive at Cuero, a state-ranked opponent awaits.

The Class 4A, Division II No. 7 Gobblers serve as Belton’s last tune-up prior to its District 10-5A, Division II opener versus visiting Killeen Ellison on Oct. 9. The Tigers have a bye next week.

So far, Cuero has not been challenged.

En route to an unblemished 4-0 record, the Gobblers have relied on a strong ground game with two backs averaging more than 85 yards rushing.

Dual-threat quarterback Jaxxon Marie, a senior, has carried the ball 51 times for 376 yards and three touchdowns to go with 658 yards and 13 scores passing, while junior running back Carmelo Perez averages 10.7 yards per carry (33-352) and has a team-high six touchdowns.

Senior receiver Walker Dietze serves as Marie’s top target with 24 receptions for

342 yards and eight touchdowns.

Cuero is coming off a 56-19 victory at Corpus Christi Miller, where Marie only needed 13 completions to deliver four touchdown passes, helping the Gobblers hold a 28-0 advantage by the conclusion of the first quarter.

Belton (2-2) was not as successful in its 49-21 loss to visiting San Angelo Central. The Bobcats never trailed and led 28-7 just minutes into the second period.

After recovering an onside kick to open the contest, the Tigers turned the ball over on downs following a brief drive, but just moments later, they regained possession thanks to junior defensive back Azian Wilkinson’s interception.

Another turnover on downs, however, led to the game’s first points.

With 7 minutes, 3 seconds remaining in the period, sophomore running back Zeyvion Johnson broke free for a 27-yard touchdown. He finished with 100 yards on 14 carries.

Belton’s third consecutive turnover

See **BELTON**,
Page B4

Lake Belton begins district play, to host Rouse Raiders

By **Tony Adams**
The Belton Journal

The Lake Belton Broncos could not have had better timing, and vice versa.

After three hard-hitting games that the team emerged 1-2 from, the Broncos were able to take a breather, heal, perform some richly-deserved community time, prepare for their District 8-5A-II opener.

Lake lost their opening game on Aug. 29 at A&M Consolidated, 41-17. The team has progressively improved, with a 34-28 loss against Round Rock McNeil in Cedar Park on Sept. 4, and 28-21 win against Killeen at Tiger Field.

“We had an outstanding bye week,” Lake Belton head coach Brian Cope said. “We practiced on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday this week, and our kids were prepared which was great to see. We also took them to Spare Time for some bowling and video games along with some community service activities. We helped out with Camp Champions, our special needs football camp along with working the A+ Carnival, and the Lakewood Fall Friendzee. It was great to see our young men giving back to such an outstanding community.”

Next up for the Broncos is rematch against Leander Rouse. The last two games have an adventure between the two schools.

In 2023, Lake Belton led Rouse 34-10 in the second quarter when a transformer blew near Tiger Field, which knocked the power out of the area for a couple of hours. After an hour delay, the game, which was a non-district game at that time, was cancelled.

Eli Mascarenas threw for 269 yards, and a touchdown and ran for 49 more having picked up two rushing scores.

Cash Robin had 103 yards receiving, Micah Hudson added 101, and Davion Peters contributed 65.

London Morgan threw for 162 yards that night for the Raiders.

In 2024, the realignment turned the series into a District 8-5A-II contest. With the teams’ defenses shutting out the others’ offenses in the second and third quarters, Rouse held on to beat the Broncos in Leander, 28-20.

Morgan had the better night, completing 20-of-29 passes for 286 yards and two touchdowns. Bryce Johnson ran for 109 yards to lead the Raiders.

The Broncos had a balanced offense, with Mascarenas having completed nine passes for 135 yards, which included a 74-yard strike to Zach Dodd. Mascarenas also ran for 82 yards.

“They did a great job of slowing the game down and taking advantage of our mistakes,” Cope said. “The are a well-coached team, and we will have now played each other four times. So, we know each other’s strengths and weekends. It will be a great way to kick off district.”

The 2025 installment does include Morgan coming back for his senior season. In three games, Morgan has completed 74.2% of his passes for 1,176 passing yards and 15 touchdowns. Alfredo Morgan has 367 receiving yards and six touchdowns and Aubryn Davis has contributed 315 receiving yards and five touchdowns.

Lake Belton’s starting 11 on defense will be tested mightily, especially in the secondary. The Broncos front seven will need to stop gaps for against the run, while keeping a keen watch on Morgan and secondary watching Morgan and Davis in the passing lanes.”

“Their offense is the best in the district, and London Morgan is outstanding,” Cope said. “He is a prolific passer that is adept at making plays on the run. We must do a great job on him all night and make him snap it one more time.”

Defensive, Rouse pressures well with 11 tackles for loss and 4.5 sacks. The sec-

See **LAKE**,
Page B3



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Sports Briefs

By Clay Whittington
The Belton Journal

The Heart of Texas Fellowship of Christian Athletes will be hosting its 26th Annual Grant Teaff Golf Tournament on Monday at Waco’s Bear Ridge Golf Course.

A field of 100 golfers will participate with a shotgun start scheduled to begin at 12:45 p.m.

Lunch will be served at 11:30 a.m. The Burton Lawless College Scholarship will be presented to a pair of recipients during the lunch.

For more information, visit HeartOfTexasFCA.org.

YOUTH BASKETBALL

Registration is now open for the Belton Christian Youth Center 2025 basketball league.

Boys and girls in kindergarten through eighth grade can participate.

Early registration discounts are available until Sept. 28 with the deadline set for Oct. 31. The fall season begins Nov. 22. Spots are limited.

Forms are available at BCYCSports.com, and information about sponsorships can be obtained by calling 254-939-5759.

For more information, visit BeltonYouth.com.

the Clements Boys and Girls Club, Belton Tiger Athletic Booster Club and Lake Belton High School Athletic Booster Club will be held Oct. 11 at 301 Thomas Arnold Road in Salado. The event will begin at 5 p.m.

General admission tickets are \$25 at the door and \$20 if purchased in advance at OutHouseTickets.com.

Kids ages 12 and under are free.

ATHLETIC PASSES

Belton ISD family passes are on sale for \$75 and can be purchased at the Belton High School field house or at the Belton ISD administration office.

The pass allows the owner and all immediate family members entry into any Belton ISD athletic event played at home, excluding football games.



When investing, one of the best abilities is durability

Scot Hrbacek, CFP® Financial Advisor

You’ve probably heard about investors who got in on the “ground floor” of a company that grew to be a huge success.

But successful investing isn’t about luck or genius. Instead, it’s about building durability.

Here are some suggestions:

First, think long-term. Most investors make their money over time, not overnight. You’ll want a well-diversified portfolio of quality investments and plan to own them for the long term.

Next, invest in quality.

For stocks, quality is often measured by the steadiness of earnings and dividend growth over time. For bonds, one measure is an investment-grade credit rating with a relatively low risk of default.

And finally, build a long-term strategy to provide a roadmap for your investment choices. You may want to make changes periodically, but do it for the right reasons, like changing goals or tolerance for risk.

But overall, follow a durable strategy personalized for your life.

This Article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor

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Junior receiver Gavin Ross shines for Tigers, averaging 140-yards per game

By Aries Ramos
The Belton Journal

Standing 5’11” and weighing 175 pounds, Belton Tigers junior wide receiver Gavin Ross has quickly established himself as one of the most reliable and explosive weapons in the Tigers’ offense. After a strong sophomore campaign, Ross has taken his game to another level this season, proving he can be both a consistent target and a game changing playmaker under the Friday night lights.

As a sophomore in 2024, Ross showed flashes of his potential by leading the Tigers in receptions with 55 catches for 759 yards and a touchdown across 11 games. Averaging nearly 70 receiving yards per contest, his ability to move the chains and stretch the field made him an essential part of Belton’s passing attack. His longest reception of the year a 66 yard catch gave Tiger fans a preview of the kind of explosiveness he would soon bring every week.

Now, as a junior, Ross has wasted no time stepping into a leadership role. Through just four games of the 2025 season, he has already hauled in 43 receptions for 562 yards and 5 touchdowns, averaging 140.5 yards per game. His consistency and production have been nothing

short of remarkable, highlighted by several standout performances.

In the season opener against Hendrickson, Ross caught 12 passes for 146 yards and a touchdown in Belton’s 21-17 win. The following week, he turned in his most dominant game yet, torching Georgetown for 159 yards and 3 touchdowns on 10 receptions to lead the Tigers to a 34-26 victory. Even in tough matchups, Ross has remained productive, recording 10 catches for 138 yards against East View and 11 receptions for 119 yards and a score against San Antonio Christian.

Ross’s combination of quickness off the line, precise route running, and reliable hands has made him a nightmare for opposing defenses. His ability to find open space and turn short gains into big plays has been a key factor in Belton’s offensive success early this season. Coaches and teammates alike have praised his work ethic and consistency, both in practice and on game day.

With one varsity season already under his belt and another two years still ahead, Ross has the chance to cement his name among the top receivers in Belton history. For now, he continues to focus on helping the Tigers compete each week, but his trajectory suggests that even bigger things lie ahead.

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Cross Country teams ready for October’s district meets

By Clay Whittington
The Belton Journal

Believe it or not, but time is running out.

After spending months practicing and competing, Belton, Lake Belton and New Tech have already reached the point in the season where the end begins approaching.

Less than two weeks separate the programs from district meets, where campaigns will come to a close for some.

Although the dates are drawing near with the District 16-5A meet set for Oct. 8 and the District 19-3A meet scheduled for Oct. 6, opportunities remain for the squads to prepare.

The Tigers and Lady Tigers travel to Granbury on Friday for the 11th annual Race For The Loot event, while the Broncos and Lady Broncos are bound for Saturday’s Georgetown ISD Invitational. The Dragons and Lady

Dragons will take part in today’s Robinson Invitational.

Lake Belton will aim to build on the momentum generated at last week’s home meet.

The Bronco Invitational was held at Temple’s Crossroads Park, where the Lady Broncos finished third in the Class 5A-6A division, scoring 91 points behind Keira Dzenowski. The freshman finished the five-kilometer course in 20 minutes, 5.2 seconds to earn the bronze medal.

Her outing was complemented by junior Jenna Benedick (13th, 21:00.5), sophomore Lucy Loa (21st, 21:31.9), junior Sarah Gray (26th, 21:51.0) and junior Madelyn Rivas (28th, 21:54.6).

Additionally, the sophomore trio of Elizabeth Sandlin (31st, 22:05.1), Alayna Fulton (35th, 22:19.9) and Claire Henn (43rd, 22:32.6) placed in the top 45, but their times did not count toward the team total. Demi Fisher (50th, 22:39.9) and Isabela Romero (90th, 23:51.7), who are seniors, also represented Lake Belton.

Leander Glenn freshman Madisyn Scott won the individual championship, leading the Lady Grizzlies to fourth place (148), while runner-up Taylor Jorde (2nd, 19:50.7) helped Liberty Hill claim the team title with 45 points. Temple was second (72).

Led by sophomore Isabella Warner (15th, 21:16.2), the Lady Tigers were ninth (262).

Belton’s score was rounded out by junior Nataly Valdez (64th, 22:59.0), junior Roxanna Delgado (66th, 23:03.1), sophomore Ai Kirkland (71st, 23:17.0) and freshman Ayla Wakershauser (74th, 23:24.6).

Also competing for the Lady Tigers was senior Destiny Schutz (81st, 23:31.3), junior Fancy Jaime (82nd, 23:33.2), senior Delilah Hoffman (86th, 23:41.7), sophomore Lilian Baggett (95th, 24:00.8) and freshman Natalie Mott (110th, 24:25.9).

In the boys division, Lake Belton was eighth (179) and Belton was 10th (269).

The Broncos were paced by junior Wyatt Potts (16th, 17:54.9), while junior Jack McCullagh (34th, 18:22.4), freshman Drew Houston (44th, 18:35.2), sophomore Cooper Schels (46th, 18:36.6) and sophomore Tyler Adkins-Beltran (50th, 18:38.9) accounted for the remaining points.

The Tigers’ total was accumulated by top-40 finishers Jose Perez-Diaz (37th, 18:28.6) and Ezra Kahler (39th, 18:30.1), who are juniors, along with senior Palu Maringathuparambil (47th, 18:36.7), junior Alexander Castelan (90th, 19:35.1) and junior Hayden Brown (91st, 19:35.7).

While their times did not count, Lake Belton junior Josiah Briggs (65th, 18:56.0), junior Austin Adams (94th, 19:39.7), senior Robert Klotz (106th, 20:11.9), sophomore Efren Romero-Meza (107th, 20:12.9) and senior Robert Thomas (11th, 20:35.7) and Belton freshman Ethan Trevino (92nd, 19:35.8), senior Daniel Arroyo (100th, 19:51.9), sophomore Nelson Funez (113th, 20:37.3) and sophomore Marcus Hernandez (116th, 20:53.4) also raced.

New Tech took part in last week’s Cameron Yoe “Dean Keen” Invitational, where a pair of top-10 showings were produced in the junior varsity division.

Neither the Dragons nor the Lady Dragons fielded a complete team, but freshman Ellie Megoulloa was seventh (14:39.59) in the two-mile race, and freshman David Martinez was seventh (20:06.10) in the 5,000-meter race.

Eighth-grader Daniel Zubaty (20th, 20:59.05), junior Desmond Long (30th, 21:49.18), freshman Zorian Hajduk (59th, 26:43.63) and sophomore Daniella Idumebor (34th, 17:39.92) also competed for New Tech.

BISD Tennis battles in district play

By Aries Ramos
The Belton Journal

Belton ISD tennis had a week full of competition and strong performances as the Lake Belton Broncos and Belton Tigers battled through important district matches. The highlight came on September 10th when the two programs met in a cross town rivalry at Belton High School.

The Tigers secured a 12-7 victory in front of their home crowd, displaying great team work and growth across the lineup. Belton capitalized on key doubles wins early, setting the stage for their success in singles. The Tigers’ balanced approach and ability to close out tough matches proved to be the difference in the rivalry showdown.

The Broncos, while coming up short, showed tremendous fight. Their boys’ doubles teams of Ethan Muelstein/Dhruv Bhat and Ben Johnson/Quint Mackenzie earned hard fought wins, while two of the girls doubles teams pushed their opponents to third set super tie breakers. In singles play, Muelstein, Bhat, Johnson, Andrew Williams, and Mackenzie each recorded victories, providing a glimpse of the young Broncos’ potential against a veteran Tiger squad.

For Belton, the win provided an important lift in the district race and reinforced the team’s strength across multiple positions. After the win, the Tigers used their open week to regroup and prepare for a challenging contest against Harker Heights as district play continues.

Lake Belton bounced back quickly after the rivalry matchup, scoring an impressive 12-7 victory over Harker Heights just a few days later. Even without three of their regular players, the Broncos rallied behind standout performances from Micah Briggs, Adriana Goenaga, and Hayden Maroney, who stepped into expanded roles and rose to the challenge.

The Broncos dominated doubles behind wins from Sara Stephens/Hannah Maroney, Lydia Pulavarti/Sonia Padmanabhan, Addie Kruppa/Goenaga, and Eli Stewart/Maroney. Singles victories were spread across both the boys and girls lineups, with Williams, Johnson, Stewart, Briggs, and Ethan Cohen picking up points on the boys’ side, while Stephens, Maroney, Padmanabhan, Kruppa, Goenaga, and Maroney powered the girls’ team to multiple wins.

As the season progresses, both Belton and Lake Belton continue to showcase the depth of talent within Belton ISD. The Tigers look to build on their district success, while the Broncos prepare for upcoming matches against Waco High and Chaparral. With both teams showing growth and determination, Belton ISD tennis promises to deliver more exciting results in the weeks ahead.

Lake - From Page B1



ondary is aggressive and provides solid pass coverage.

The Broncos are averaging 164 yards passing and 134 yards rushing per game so far this season. Lake Belton’s offense, particularly the offensive line, will have their hands full with the Raiders’ front seven.

“Their front and linebackers are outstanding,” Cope said. “They are athletic in the secondary as well. This will be a tough test. We are finally healthy, and need to play up to our capabilities. We must become more explosive on offense and utilize our speed with our downhill run game.”

Friday night’s contest starts an eight-game District 8-5A-II schedule where all nine teams have played quality non-district opponents. No team emerged from non-district play undefeated, and all except for Glenn have at lead one win.

“We need to win the explosive play battle and the turnover battle,” Cope said. “Also, first downs for us on offense will be key, and third downs defensively. It is going to be a fun night, and can’t wait to watch our kids leave it all out there with a 1-0 mentality.”

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Volleyball - From Page B1

trict 16-5A play, while Belton dropped to 22-11 overall and 0-1 in district action.

“The first and second sets were rough,” Belton head coach Haleigh Johnson said. “They battled, and that’s all that we could ask of them. At times, they had a hard time holding their composure. We just have to do a better job of serve-receive and first-touch.”

District 16-5A continues for both teams this week.

Lake Belton will host Ellison in a 5:30 pm match on Friday at Bronco Gymnasium. The Broncos will travel to take on Waco High on Tuesday at 6:30 pm.

Belton will travel to Waco on Friday to take on University in a 5:30 pm match, and will host Chaparral on Tuesday at 6:30 pm.



Belton Lake Stillhouse

GOOD. Water normal stain; 87 degrees; 0.13 feet above pool. Water surface temperature is likely the hottest we will see for 2025 now that there are multiple cold fronts due in the next week. The drastic drop in water level and increased water temperature has adversely impacted the white bass fishing for the time being. Any concentrations of fish and shad are very hard to come by. Life seems to be scattered between 25-30 feet deep over the entire lake. White bass fishing is poor right now and likely to remain so until the release of water is finalized. Perhaps two in three mornings will see some light topwater action as white bass force shad to the surface for about 30 minutes either side of sunrise on Cork Rigs equipped with Sandy Sandwich streamers. Downriggers rigged with #12, or #13 Pet Spoons are the way to go to cover lots of ground; when fish are found, work that area until you stop catching, then down-rig again to find another concentration of fish. Report by Bob Maindelle, Holding the Line Guide Service. Catfish are good. Anglers can find blue catfish around points and river channels in 10-25 feet of water. Larger fresh cut baits have been effective for trophy-size fish. Eater fish under 10 pounds can be caught slow-drifting with small cut shad along ledges and river channels. Channel catfish are great on punch bait in 10-20 feet of water. Flatheads are good on live bait in shallow water around river mouths. Report by Brian Worley, B&S Catfishing.

FAIR. Water stained; 87-88 degrees; 0.58 feet above pool. Dropping about 0.04 feet per day with a 200+ CFS release ongoing. Water surface temperature is likely the hottest we'll see for 2025, given multiple cold fronts due in the next 10 days. USACE has reopened all boat ramps except Cedar Gap near the FM3481 bridge. The drastic drop in water level and increased water temperature has adversely impacted the white bass fishing for the time being. Any concentrations of fish and shad are very hard to come by. Life seems to be scattered between 25-30 feet deep over the lower two-thirds of the lake. White bass fishing is poor right now and likely to remain so until we get a drop in temperatures. If you fish, downriggers rigged with #12 Pet Spoons are the way to go to cover lots of ground; when fish are found, work that area until you stop catching, then down-rig again to find another concentration of fish. Keep a Cork Rig with Sandy Sandwich streamer handy for eruptions of topwater feeding by schoolie-sized largemouth and white bass. They seem to stay on the surface for just moments at a time. Report by Bob Maindelle, Holding the Line Guide Service. Fish have been shallow since it flooded but with the water receding, the bass have moved back out. Look for grass on humps and underwater points and work those areas with Texas-rigged worms or craws. Working the coves in deeper water are producing as well. Worms and creature baits work well in those areas. Report by Bryan Cotter, Texas Hawgs.

Fishing REPORT



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Belton - From Page B1

on downs allowed Central to extend its advantage to 14-0 after quarterback Micah Smith, who was 11 of 19 for 221 yards and four scores, found senior receiver Jimmy Edwards for a 60-yard touchdown.

The Tigers responded on the ensuing drive, matching the Bobcats’ one-play score with one of their own as junior quarterback Will Shepard and Wilkinson combined for a 77-yard touchdown, but Belton would not get any closer.

Central (3-1) needed less than three minutes

to return to the end zone thanks to Smith’s second touchdown to Edwards — a 19-yard strike with 1:49 remaining in the period.

The Tigers would punt before the quarter concluded, and the 21-7 cushion carried over into the second period, where Edwards recorded his third touchdown on a 13-yard pass from Smith early in the period.

Making matters worse, Shepard was injured just before halftime and did not return.

In his absence, sophomore quarterback Sawyer

Harbin completed 15 of 22 passes for 149 yards and two touchdowns. Shepard was 11-of-19 passing for 166 yards and score prior to being sidelined.

Gavin Ross, a junior, had game-highs of 11 catches for 119 yards and a touchdown.

Defensively, senior Adam Gonzalez led Belton with 11 tackles, including eight solo.

Last season, the Tigers suffered a narrow 40-38 defeat to the Gobblers after recording just 32 points in their first four games combined.

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Local Activities & Events

Newcomers Club Activities

09/25: 42 Dominoes, Mexican Train Dominoes

09/26: Trailblazers Walking Group

09/27: Jimmy's Egg

10/01: Monthly Luncheon, Popcorn Bridge

10/02: 42 Dominoes

10/06: Chat 'n' Canasta

10/07: Footloose Singles

10/09: Couples Night Out,
42 Dominoes,
Mexican Train Dominoes

10/10: TGIF Lunch

10/13: Bookworms

10/14: Singing Bluebonnets

10/15: Popcorn Bridge

10/16: Meet & Greet,
42 Dominoes,
Non-Fiction Book Club

10/18: Exploring Wine

10/20: Snack Time Mah Jongg

10/21: Bunco

10/22: Crochet & Knit, Fun Lunch

10/23: 42 Dominoes, Mexican Train Dominoes

10/24: Trailblazers Walking Group

10/25: Jimmy's Egg

10/27: Well Read Women, Monday Canasta

10/28: Singing Bluebonnets

10/30: 42 Dominoes

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CAC announces 2025 concert lineups

The Cultural Activities Center in Temple has announced lineups for its two premier music series, and visiting bands will include Los Lonely Boys, Asleep at the Wheel and the wildly popular Shinyribs. 2025 will usher in new music in both the Texas Music Series and the Central Texas Orchestral Society's Classical Music Series. Some old friends will be making return engagements in Temple, and many new performers also will be playing the CAC stage. For more information, please visit <https://www.cacarts.org/events>. Be on the lookout for the full 2025 Texas Music Series lineup in next weeks edition of the newspaper.

Here's a look at the 2025 Texas Music Series:

AN CLIBURN FINALIST CLAYTON STEPHENSON — Oct. 18

American pianist Clayton Stephenson's love for music is immediately apparent in his joyous charisma onstage, expressive power and natural ease at the instrument.

ASLEEP AT THE WHEEL — Nov. 8

Founded in 1970, Asleep at the Wheel has been part of the American roots music landscape for more than 50 years.

SHINYRIBS - Dec. 6

Shinyribs, a regular visitor to the CAC, defies genres as a melting pot of Texas blues, New Orleans funk, horn-driven Memphis soul, country twang, border music, big band swing and roots-rock. The 2025 CTOS Classic Music Series includes four big shows.

MPR Explorer - Sept 25

The MPR Explorers (sponsored by the Mary Ruth Briggs Library) is holding their monthly "Conversation over Coffee" with Interim Fire Chief Shane Sibley, on Thursday, September 25 from 10:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. at the Garrett and Mic Hill Event Center (60 Morgan's Point Road).

Celebrating the Oktoberfest Season - Oct 4

This family-friendly celebration and fundraiser for the Friends of the Mary Ruth Briggs Library will be part of the City's Community Yard Sale and features Jam Session Challenge for volunteer musicians and singers, Beginner's line dance class and open dancing, German food contest, Bold Republic Brewing and much more. MPR Page Turner's Party & Fundraiser – Celebrating the Oktoberfest Season on Oct 4, 2025, 100 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. at Ansay Park (between Thistle and Lake Forest Drive), Morgan's Point Resort. Email volunteers.mpr@gmail.com with any questions.

McDowell Cemetary Association - Oct 4

The annual mettof the McDowell Cemetary Associatio is scheduled for Saturady, Oct 4, 2025, 10:00 a.m. in the the sanctuary of Nolan Valley Baptist Church, 13206 FM 93, Belton, located near the cemetary. The association continues to solicit funds or any input about past burials. Inquiries or donations may be sent to John Alexander at McDowell Cemetary Association, 706 N Main St, Belton, Tx 76513. If you have any questions or comments contact Mr. Alexander at 254-541-4349.

Family Camp Out - Oct 24 - 26

Roll up your sleeping bags and hit the trail for a campout at Heritage Park. Activities include fishing, kayaking, and s'mores. This year we are offering an extended weekend of fun, Saturday-Sunday, October 24-26, 2025. Stay tuned for registration information from Belton Pars & Recreation.

250th Birthday of the United States Marine Corps Ball - Nov 8

The Louis Wayne Qualls Marine Corps League Detachment 1249 is proud to be hosting the 250th Birthday of the United States Marine Corps Ball on November 8th, 2025, starting at 5pm at the Lone Star Convention Center, Bldg 5764, 24th St, Fort Hood, TX. Events will include Traditional Marine Corps Birthday Ceremonies, Guest Speaker, Sit down Dinner, Music, Dancing, Cash Bar. Tickets are \$65.00 per person; corporate sponsorship is available. Open to all, Black Tie / Military Dress. Tickets must be purchased by October 31st, 2025, at www.mcl1249tx.com. No ticket sales at the door. Website will have a link to get your base pass online and will be active 2 weeks prior to the Ball.

Annual Library Art Show - Nov 15

Mary Ruth Briggs Library in Morgan's Point Resort will hold our 7th Annual Library Art Show on Saturday, November 15th from 6:00 to 8:30 PM at the Garrett and Mic Hill Event Center located at 60 Morgan's Point Blvd in MPR. Drop off times for art pieces are as follows: Friday, November 14th, 9:00 AM until 6:00 PM and Saturday, November 15th, 9:00 AM to Noon. Art entries are limited to 3 per artist and should not include previous entries. Artwork that can be hung must

have a hanger on the back that can be suspended on wires to be hung on a wall. Include a 3 x 5 white index card with a short description of your work. Questions? Contact Library@mprtx.us. Cash prizes and ribbons will be awarded for Children and Adults (16 and up) as well as a Peoples Choice Award as decided by the attendees. For online applications see the website at morganspointresorttx.com or paper applications are available at MPR City Hall at 8 Morgan's Point Blvd, Morgan's Point Resort Texas 76513. We look forward to seeing you for a night of music by the LBHS Silver Strings, wine, appetizers and fun!

Bell Area Parkinson's Support group (BAPS-North) meets at CTCOG, 2180 N. Main St, Belton on the 2nd and 4th Fridays from 2:30-4:00 PM every month. All are welcome, and there is no membership cost. The Bell Area Parkinson's Support group (BAPS-West) meets at St. Andrews United Methodist Church Fellowship Hall, 206 W Fowler Ave, Killeen on the 1st and 3rd Fridays from 2:30-4:00 PM every month. For more information contact Gayle Shull at GayleInBelton@gmail.com or (254) 718-4197.

Marine Corp League will meet the third Tuesday of each mont at VFW 3859. Dinner is served at 6:30 p.m. and meeting will begin at 7:00 p.m. 201 VFW Dr, Harker heights, Tx 76548. Email commandant@mcl1249tx.comfor more inforamtion.

NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) will meet both on TUESDAY, Sept. 23rd at 6:30pm at the Temple VA Hospital. Use the entrance on the Valet parking side of the hospital and take the elevator to the 5th floor -Conference Room 5G31. Both care-givers, supporters and those suffering from mental illness are welcome to join us for mutual support and sharing of information . For more information, call 254-771-3638

Aspen Hospice and Palliative Care Volunteers Needed Listed here are many ways you can help make a difference for our hospice patients. You can provide companionship, listen to music, read, reminisce, play games, cards, checkers, paint nails, apply makeup, curl hair or take them on walks. Please visit aspenhealthcare.net or call 512-856-5668 for more information.

Young's Daughters Funeral Home Dementia/Alzheimer's Caregiver Support Group occurs weekly on Fridays from 6-7 p.m. This group allows your loved ones to join. Loved ones will be doing activities while the group of caregivers are joining together to better understand and learn tips and tricks for daily life. Young's Daughters Funeral and Bereavement Center is located at 4235 East Hwy 190 in Temple.

Bell County Historical Commission holds their meetings on the fourth Monday of every month at 6 p.m. in the historical Bell County Court House, 101 E. Central Ave in Belton. Join us in our vision of preserving and promoting Bell County's rich historical heritage for current and future generations. We are dedicated to initiating and conducting programs that preserve and celebrate the county's historic cultural resources in alignment with state laws governing historical preservation in Texas. Our community resources consist of a research room, book repository, cemetery information, historical markers and monument records. Our services include information on historic preservation, educational programming, history community outreach and partnerships. We welcome you to join other history minded folks and get involved by serving on one of our committees that consist of preservation, cemetery, markers and education. To volunteer or for more information please visit historical-commission@bellcounty.texas.gov, call 254-933-5917 or visit the office located in the historic Bell County Courthouse, 101 E. Central Ave., RM 117.

Pistons on the Creek will meet every third Friday from 5:30 p.m. to 11 p.m. Come down to Nolan Creek and show off your rides. From classic to modern, muscle, rat rod, exotic, all automotive enthusiasts are welcome. Support our awesome downtown businesses and restaurants surrounded by live music, food, drinks and a great atmosphere.

Bell Fine Arts Visitors welcome Wednesday's from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at 306 E 5th Ave in Belton. Majong games are available every Monday from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. Come join the fun and meet new folks. For more information text Jeanne at 409-313-0611.

Local chapter of the Crochet Guild of America meets from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. on Wednesdays at the Lena Armstrong Public Library, 301 E. First St., in Belton. The group is open to anyone interested in crochet. All skill levels are welcome. For information email Betty Reichert at bettyreichert@yahoo.com or Kathy Bement at katshookandneedle@gmail.com. Anyone interested in joining the local chapter of the Crochet Guild of America will also need to join the National Crochet Guild of America. Visit www.crochet.org for details.

Bell County Texas Democratic Women holds their monthly meeting on the third Saturday of each month at 10 a.m. in the Belton AgriLife Center, 1605 N Main in Belton. Join us to hear from local and state candidates and about important issues and events. This is open to the public.

Leadership Belton is an excellent source for learning leadership skills. This 10-month program focuses on three key elements: community awareness training, leadership training, and team building. Do you have someone ready to take the next step to become a leader? If so, Leadership Belton is here to make that difference. For more information on how to participate, contact the chamber at 254-939-3551 or e-mail at info@beltonchamber.com.

Engage & Empower with BISD Belton ISD believes the learning experiences of our students are enhanced through the engagement of our community. We invite parents and community members to get involved in our schools. Register as a volunteer with our new volunteer and partnership system at the following link: https://beltonisd.ezcommunicator.net/edu/beltonisd/login_form.aspx?app=0.

Temple-Belton Ladies Lion Club Meeting Second and Fourth Monday of every month at 6:30 pm at the Belton V.F.W., 2311 S. Pearl St., Belton.

Community Information

TAKE ME HOME PROGRAM The Belton Police Department is adopting the Take Me Home Program, aimed at helping individuals who need special assistance to return safely home after getting lost. The program is a database with photos and personal information to help police officers find someone who is lost or wandered away from home. Take Me Home is designed for individuals who may need additional aid including those with Dementia, Autism or specific mental health needs. It's free to register someone and the data is kept confidential to first responders. You can sign up a loved one here: www.beltontexas.gov/takemehome. Read more about the program here: https://www.beltontexas.gov/news_detail_T11_R1166.php.

Dial 988 for Mental Health Emergencies To help those contemplating suicide, press option 1 for assistance with military/veteran population.

Text-to-911 for speech/ hearing impaired, those unable to call or speak due to home invasion, abduction or domestic violence or physically incapable. Providing location, city name and nature of the emergency in the first message is imperative. For further education on this service, don't hesitate to call 254-933-5500.

Citizens Helping in Police Service (CHIPS)

are extra eyes and ears while in areas where large groups may gather. Contact the Belton Police Dept. to join.

Belton Citizens Police Academy meets Thursday nights to enhance police and community partnerships. Apply online to be a part of this exciting program.

Slam the Scam Throughout the year, we give you the tools to recognize scams and stop scammers from stealing your money and personal information. Share the information with your loved ones & Slam the Scam! Visit ssa.gov/scam for tips.

Dementia/Alzheimers Support Group- Young's Daughters Funeral Home & Bereavement Center, 4235 E. US HWY 190 in Temple. Fridays from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m., Join us for activities while caregivers discuss and help each other during this difficult time. Call Sabrina at 254-401-1302

LEGALS

All persons interested in the aforesaid estate are commanded to appear at or before the time set for said hearing by filing a written contest or answer to said application should they desire to oppose or contest it. Said written contest or answer shall be filed in the office of Shelley Coston, County Clerk, Bell County, Texas, PO Box 480, Belton, Texas 76513.

LEGALS

The name and address of the attorney for applicant is: JAY R. BEATTY, 3106 SOUTH WS YOUNG DR BLDG D #401, KILLEEN TX 76542
The officer serving this Citation shall, in compliance with the Law, serve it by publication once in a newspaper of the general circulation in this, the County in which the decedent last resided as required by Section 202.052 of the Texas Estate Code, for not less than ten days before the return day hereof, exclusive of the day of publication, and the date of publication said newspaper bears shall be the day of publication.
Issued and given under my hand and seal of said Court at office on September 19, 2025.
Shelley Coston County Clerk of Bell County, Texas, PO Box 480, 1201 Huey Road, Belton, TX 76513
By: Lillian Phillips Deputy
09.25

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Notice is hereby given that original Letters Testamentary for the Estate of John Rawlinson, Deceased, were issued on September 10, 2025, in Cause No. 25CPB00501, pending in the County Court-At-Law No: 1, Bell County, Texas, to: Sherril Rawlinson.
All persons having claims against this Estate which is currently being administered are required to present them to the undersigned within the time and in the manner prescribed by law.
Estate of John Rawlinson,c/o: Sherril Rawlinson,3602 Nottingham Ct., Killeen, Texas 76549
DATED the 19th day of September 2025.
Respectfully submitted,
THE ZIMMERMAN LAW FIRM, P.C.
By: /s/ Garrett L. Beach,
Garrett L. Beach, State Bar No.: 24101493,3501 W. Waco Dr.,Waco, Texas 76710,
Telephone: (254) 633-3333, Facsimile: (254) 752-9680, E-mail: gbeach@zlawhelp.com,
Attorneys for Sherril Rawlinson
09.25

THE STATE OF TEXAS
CITATION BY PUBLICATION
CASE NUMBER 25CPB00383

To: UNKNOWN HEIRS
RICHARD A. MURRELL, Applicant, on June 17, 2025, filed an Application for Independent Administration, Letters of Administration, and Determination of Heirship in a proceeding styled: RICKY A. MURRELL, Deceased, and bearing the number 25CPB00383 in the County Court of Bell County, Texas.
The court will hear the aforesaid Application after the expiration of ten days, exclusive of the day of publication, from the date this citation is published which will be September 25, 2025 in the County Court at Law #1 Courtroom, at the Bell County Justice Complex, 1201 Huey Road, in Belton, Texas.
All persons interested in the aforesaid estate are commanded to appear at or before the time set for said hearing by filing a written contest or answer to said application should they desire to oppose or contest it. Said written contest or answer shall be filed in the office of Shelley Coston, County Clerk, Bell County, Texas, PO Box 480, Belton, Texas 76513.
The name and address of the attorney for applicant is: JAY R. BEATTY, 3106 SOUTH WS YOUNG DR BLDG D #401, KILLEEN TX 76542
The officer serving this Citation shall, in compliance with the Law, serve it by publication once in a newspaper of the general circulation in this, the County in which the decedent last resided as required by Section 202.052 of the Texas Estate Code, for not less than ten days before the return day hereof, exclusive of the day of publication, and the date of publication said newspaper bears shall be the day of publication.
Issued and given under my hand and seal of said Court at office on September 17, 2025.
Shelley Coston County Clerk of Bell County, Texas, PO Box 480, 1201 Huey Road, Belton, TX 76513
By: Lillian Phillips Deputy
09.25

THE STATE OF TEXAS
CITATION BY PUBLICATION
CASE NUMBER 24CPB00155

To: ALL OTHER LIVING RELATIVES
YIZHE YUAN, Applicant, on September 17, 2025, filed an APPLICATION FOR APPOINTMENT OF SUCCESSOR GUARDIAN in a proceeding style, incapacitate person, and bearing the number 24CPB00155 in the County Court of Bell County, Texas. The court will hear the aforesaid Application after the expiration of ten days, exclusive of the day of publication, from the date this citation is published which will be September 25, 2025, in the County Court at Law #1 Courtroom, at the Bell County Justice Complex, 1201 Huey Road, in Belton, Texas. All people interested in the aforesaid state are commanded to appear at or before the time set for said hearing by filing a written contest or answering to said application should they desire to oppose or contest it. Said written contest or answer shall be filed in the office of Shelley Coston, County Clerk, Bell County, Texas, PO Box 480, Belton, Texas 76513. The name and address of the attorney for applicants is: MARY LINDLEY-WILEY, 100 W CENTEX EXPWY STE 302,

LEGALS

HARKER HEIGHTS TX 76548
The officer serving this Citation shall, in compliance with the Law, serve it by publication once in a newspaper of the general circulation in this, the County in which the decedent last resided as required by Section 202.052 of the Texas Estate Code, for not less than ten days before the return day hereof, exclusive of the day of publication, and the date of publication said newspaper bears shall be the day of publication.
Issued and given under my hand and seal of said Court at office on September 17, 2025.
Shelley Coston County Clerk of Bell County, Texas, PO Box 480, 1201 Huey Road, Belton, TX 76513
By: Anna Morse Deputy 09.25

THE STATE OF TEXAS
CITATION BY PUBLICATION CASE NUMBER
24CPB00717

To: UNKNOWN HEIRS
JONATHAN THOMPSON, Applicant, on September 17, 2025, filed an Application to Determine Heirship in a proceeding styled: JIM ED SIMS, Deceased, and bearing the number 24CPB00717 in the County Court of Bell County, Texas.
The court will hear the aforesaid Application after the expiration of ten days, exclusive of the day of publication, from the date this citation is published which will be September 25, 2025, in the County Court at Law #1 Courtroom, at the Bell County Justice Complex, 1201 Huey Road, in Belton, Texas.
All persons interested in the aforesaid estate are commanded to appear at or before the time set for said hearing by filing a written contest or answer to said application should they desire to oppose or contest it. Said written contest or answer shall be filed in the office of Shelley Coston, County Clerk, Bell County, Texas, PO Box 480, Belton, Texas 76513.
The name and address of the attorney for applicant is: DAN CORBN, CORBIN STAPLER & CLAPPER PC, 603 N 8TH, KILLEEN TX 76541
The officer serving this Citation shall, in compliance with the Law, serve it by publication once in a newspaper of the general circulation in this, the County in which the decedent last resided as required by Section 202.052 of the Texas Estate Code, for not less than ten days before the return day hereof, exclusive of the day of publication, and the date of publication said newspaper bears shall be the day of publication.
Issued and given under my hand and seal of said Court at office on September 17, 2025.
Shelley Coston County Clerk of Bell County, Texas, PO Box 480, 1201 Huey Road, Belton, TX 76513
By :Lillian Phillips Deputy
09.25

THE STATE OF TEXAS
CITATION BY PUBLICATION
CASE NUMBER 25CPB00538

To: UNKNOWN HEIRS
MICAH DILLARD, Applicant, on August 25, 2025, filed an Application to Determine Heirship in a proceeding styled: BUNNITA L. HARRINGTON, Deceased, and bearing the number 25CPB00538 in the County Court of Bell County, Texas.
The court will hear the aforesaid Application after the expiration of ten days, exclusive of the day of publication, from the date this citation is published which will be September 25, 2025, in the County Court at Law #1 Courtroom, at the Bell County Justice Complex, 1201 Huey Road, in Belton, Texas.
All persons interested in the aforesaid estate are commanded to appear at or before the time set for said hearing by filing a written contest or answer to said application should they desire to oppose or contest it. Said written contest or answer shall be filed in the office of Shelley Coston, County Clerk, Bell County, Texas, PO Box 480, Belton, Texas 76513.
The name and address of the attorney for applicant is: Lauryn E. Winters, 2700 Travis St 1035, Houston TX 77006
The officer serving this Citation shall, in compliance with the Law, serve it by publication once in a newspaper of the general circulation in this, the County in which the decedent last resided as required by Section 202.052 of the Texas Estate Code, for not less than ten days before the return day hereof, exclusive of the day of publication, and the date of publication said newspaper bears shall be the day of publication.
Issued and given under my hand and seal of said Court at office on September 17, 2025.
Shelley Coston County Clerk of Bell County, Texas, PO Box 480, 1201 Huey Road, Belton, TX 76513
By: Lillian Phillips Deputy
09.25

THE STATE OF TEXAS
CITATION BY PUBLICATION-PARENT AND
CHILD

To: Nick Lopez, any Unknown Father and All Whom It May Concern, Respondents, in the hereinafter styled and numbered cause:
You have been sued. You may employ an attorney. If you or your attorney do not file a written answer with the clerk who issued this citation by 10 a.m. on the Monday next following the expiration of 20 days after you were served this citation and petition, a default judgment may be taken against you. The Original Petition of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services,

LEGALS

Petitioner, was filed in the 146th Judicial District Court of Bell County, Texas, on June 10, 2025, against Caseylyn Plugge, Randy Pechal, and Nick Lopez, Respondent(s), numbered 25DFAM354382, and entitled “In the Interest of SAM PLUGGE, minor child.” The suit requests to terminate the parent-child relationships and/or to appoint a managing conservator of the child. The date and place of birth of the child who is the subject of the suit is: SAM PLUGGE, DOB: June 7, 2025, Place of birth: Texas
The court has authority in this suit to render an order in the child’s interest that will be binding on you, including the termination of the parent-child relationship, the determination of paternity, and the appointment of a conservator with authority to consent to the child’s adoption.
The name and address of the attorney for plaintiff is Ryan Smith, Bell County Attorney’s Office, P.O. Box 1127, Belton, TX 76513
Issued and given under my hand and seal of the Court at Belton, Texas, this the 15th day of September 2025
Joanna Staton, District Clerk of Bell County, Texas 1201 Huey Road, P.O. Box 909, Belton, TX 76513
By: C. Rodriguez Deputy.
09.25

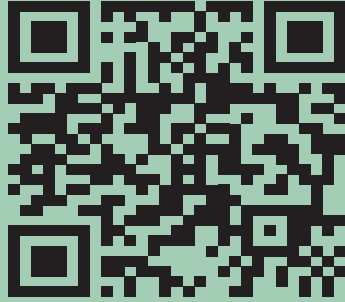
THE STATE OF TEXAS
CITATION BY PUBLICATION-PARENT AND
CHILD

To: Brandy Miller, Joseph Hicks, any Unknown Father and All Whom It May Concern, Respondents, in the hereinafter- styled and -numbered cause:
You have been sued. You may employ an attorney. If you or your attorney do not file a written answer with the clerk who issued this citation by 10 a.m. on the Monday next following the expiration of 20 days after you were served this citation and petition, a default judgment may be taken against you. The Amended Petition of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, Petitioner, was filed in the 146th Judicial District Court of Bell County, Texas, on September 16, 2025, against Brandy Miller and Joseph Hicks, Respondent(s), numbered 25DF AM355763, and entitled “In the Interest of WEDNESDAY HICKS, minor child.” The suit requests to terminate the parent-child relationships and/or to appoint a managing conservator of the child. The date and place of birth of the child who is the subject of the suit is: WEDNESDAY HICKS, DOB: August 20, 2025, Place of birth: Texas
The court has authority in this suit to render an order in the child’s interest that will be binding on you, including the termination of the parent-child relationship, the determination of paternity, and the appointment of a conservator with authority to consent to the child’s adoption.
The name and address of the attorney for plaintiff is Jennine Cintron, Bell County Attorney’s Office, P.O. Box 1127, Belton, TX 76513
Issued and given under my hand and seal of the Court at Belton, Texas, this the 22nd day of September 2025
Joanna Staton, District Clerk of Bell County, Texas 1201 Huey Road, P.O. Box 909, Belton, TX 76513
By: C Rodriguez Deputy
09.25

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Notice is hereby given that original Letters of Testamentary for the Estate of Barbara Davis Baugh. Aka Barbara Luz Baugh, Deceased, were issued on 09/11/25, in Cause No. 25CPB00547, pending in the County Court at Law No. 1 of Bell County, Texas, to: Flay Franklin Baugh, Jr
All persons having claims against this Estate which is currently being administered are required to present them to the undersigned within the time and in the manner prescribed by law.
c/o: ESTATE OF Barbara Davis Baugh, c/o: Flay Franklin Baugh, Jr, 2609 Palmetto Drive, Temple, Texas 76502
DATED the11th day of SEPT. 2025.
J. ERIC STOEBNER, State Bar No.: 24049619, 2106 Bird Creek Drive, Temple, TX 76502,
Telephone: (254) 771-1855, Facsimile: (254) 771-2082, E-mail: eric@templrelawoffice.com 09.25

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Did you know?

Chicken is a wildly popular food source that contributes 90 percent of the world's poultry meat production according to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. Chicken lovers may wonder if white meat really is, as some suggest, a healthier option than dark meat. That answer is somewhat elusive, and a side-by-side comparison of the two conducted by a registered dietitian for EatingWell affirms that elusiveness.

One cup of dark meat (3.4 grams) is higher in saturated fat than the same size portion of white meat (1.4 grams), and that's arguably the reason behind the former's reputation as a less healthy option than the latter. But some may note that the fat content in dark meat makes it juicier and therefore requires less seasoning than white meat. Chicken seasoning tends to be high in sodium, which can offset some of the nutritional benefits of white meat com-

pared to dark meat, particularly since the sodium content in each type of meat is roughly the same (133 milligrams for dark meat, 104 milligrams for white meat). Individuals who have certain health conditions, such as diabetes and pancreatitis, should opt for white meat over dark meat because they have much to gain from eating a low-fat diet. Others can consult with their physicians to determine if their best option is white meat or dark meat.



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EDITORIAL

Time to make some soup

My Front Porch • Lynette Sowell

There’s an old folk tale called “Stone Soup,” and you might be familiar with it.

It goes something like this:

A hungry stranger comes to a village, asking to be fed, but the villagers tell him they have nothing and turn him away.

However, he amazes them when he says he’s going to make stone soup, and they can all have a taste once he’s done.

They gather around the giant kettle, into which the stranger drops the stone. Then, he asks that they each bringing a little something to the pot.

Some bring vegetables, others a bit of meat, everything for a good stew.

And then, the villagers sit down with him for a good meal, the stranger’s “stone soup.”

There are variations of this folk tale throughout the world, but they all have a similar theme: the

stranger gets from them what the villagers had all along.

However, they were too stingy to realize the great wealth they all had if they would only work together.

We readers—especially if we heard this story when we were children—probably smiled the first time we read the tale.

You can’t fool children easily. I remember sitting in the story circle way back when the teacher read the story to the class. We all marveled that although the villagers said they didn’t have “anything,” they had enough when they put what they had together.

Isn’t it silly, to say you have nothing to offer, or worse, cling to what you have and not share it?

Stingy, hoarding, suspicious. None of those qualities make for cooperation, working together, or any of the positive qualities we try to teach our children.

Stingy: I’m not sharing with anyone, because I’ll

lose what I have and no one will take care of *me*.

Hoarding: If I don’t keep something for myself, I’ll lose everything.

Suspicious: If I give to someone, no one will appreciate it and someone, somewhere will definitely take advantage of me.

If we only look out for number one, we don’t foster that spirit of community, of working together.

“I’ll help you only if it serves my personal interests” doesn’t help either.

No wonder sometimes we can come across as uncooperative, stingy, selfish. No matter how much we claim to welcome others to our table.

Just tossing those ideas into the pot. What a great force we could be, what *community*, if we would only choose to work together and leave our own personal agendas at home. Let’s hope we can make some delicious stone soup in 2025.

Small Little Joys

Shop the Insanity • Darren Blair

In 1987, toy company Galoob first released Micro Machines, a line of toy cars wherein each vehicle was only about the size of a human knuckle. Most vehicles would be released in themed packs of five vehicles each (construction, military, sports cars, et cetera), and a number of play sets representing portions of a city (police station, fire station, hospital, et cetera) were released that year as well. The idea was that if a person collected these items – all of which were designed for easy storage – they could have a tiny little city right there at their fingertips.

Micro Machines was such a smash hit that by the time a neighbor introduced me to them in 1989 everyone from Matchbox to Funrise had begun releasing various imitation brands in order to cash in. I started collecting them that same year, later dis-

covering that quite by chance most of the vehicles and play sets were to scale with N-gauge and Z-gauge model railroading as well as some tabletop role-playing games. I stuck with the line until the end of 2000, when it went on hiatus in the United States, got back into it when it returned circa 2002, got back into it again when Hasbro, who purchased Galoob circa 1999, did a line of product for the Star Wars Sequel Trilogy, and dove right in when Hasbro licensed the franchise to Jazzwares for an ill-fated 2020 revival. I’ve also been collecting near competitors as I find them, all hoping to continue developing out my little city.

Folks, whenever a person is stressed or facing a difficult situation, they’ll often be advised to find their “happy place”. That is, they’ll be advised to take a few minutes and let their mind wander to a state of mind

where they’re thinking about what they enjoy and what they aspire to do. Well, I’ve noted that my “happy place” is very often the little towns I’ve tried to create over the years (the bulk of my collection being in storage right now), to the point that sometimes as a mental exercise I’ll try to puzzle out an entire product assortment based on some criteria (such as “only vehicles released during a given decade”).

Additionally, we also have the reminder to enjoy the “little” things in life. In most instances it’s metaphorical, a reference to the “simple” pleasures like spending time with loved ones or engaging in a pastime you find enjoyable. However, it can also be literal in the sense of the small objects, like a new set of those little vehicles, which bring delight and help people focus on the positive side.

As I write this, there’s a lot of turmoil going on in the world. In fact, a TV in the other room is broadcasting a breaking news story about a national tragedy. I can only guess what will happen between now and when this here column sees print.

Am I saying to run away from reality? No. But folks, it’s perfectly fine to admit that you’ve reached your limit with the world and need to step back for a few minutes. Take that time. Clear your head. Recharge your energy. Find your perspective. Spend a few minutes doing something you enjoy as a reminder that there’s good in the world. Once you’re ready, you can re-engage with everything around you.

PS – If you’re a parent, don’t be afraid to introduce your kids to the things you yourself enjoyed at their age. They might just like it too.

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Belton PD, Bell County Sheriff’s Office welcome three to their ranks

By Lynette Sowell
The Belton Journal

The Anderson Campus Center conference room was nearly standing room only at the recent graduation of the Bravo class from Central Texas College’s Police Academy.

The class of 24 cadets had the highest graduating grade point average in the 60-year history of the academy.

Among them were TaMinka C. Watford, who is now serving with the Belton Police Department, and Alyssa T. Hargis and Enegue D. Rudnick, who are with the Bell County Sheriff’s Office.

The cadets scored an average of 91.7% for the entire course.

Dr. Michelle Carter, chancellor, addressed the graduates and she expressed gratitude to the faculty, staff, and families who supported the cadets.

She highlighted the importance of integrity, excellence, and service in law enforcement, referencing the Book of Isaiah, chapter six, verse eight, ‘Also, I heard the voice, voice of the Lord saying, ‘Whom shall I send and who will go for us?’ Then said I, ‘Here am I, send me.’ When I reflect on this scripture, I think about you. So thank you for courageously answering

the call to law enforcement, a critical member of the first responder team and the oath to protect and serve your communities.

“During the presentation of your certificates, I will also present you with my coin, the Chancellor’s coin. Symbolically, it is a challenge coin. On the one side, I am acknowledging your accomplishment in completing the program and your courageous decision to pursue an honorable career in law enforcement. On the other side of the coin are character traits that I value, both personally and professionally. I charge you to continue exemplifying these character traits throughout your career.

“Number one, integrity, doing what’s right, even when no one is looking. Remain strong in your moral and ethical conditions. Number two, excellence. Perform your duties at the highest level. Third, service. As a public servant, I encourage you to always serve the honor and respect for yourself and for others.”

Andrew Flores, Chief of Police at Texas A&M University Central Texas, served as the keynote speaker.

He likewise emphasized the importance of integrity, service, and ex-



BELTON JOURNAL/Lynette Sowell

The Bravo Class of the Central Texas College Police Academy had 24 cadets graduate, with 13 different law enforcement agencies.

cellence in policing. The graduating class was encouraged to strive for excellence in their service, embodying values like fairness, compassion, and respect. Chief Flores highlighted the challenges officers face and advised them to remember their commitment to justice and community.

Class President, Brennden T. Ward, now among the ranks of the Cedar Park Police Department, spoke to his classmates and fellow graduates.

“It is inevitable that disagreements and tension filled moments will occur when dealing with the public. We will be heavily scrutinized and expect to be certain humans and make mistakes. Despite all that, it doesn’t change

the fact that we are needed for all thoughts of respect, empathy and unity during those difficult moments, because, after all, we are not enemies, but friends, and we have to believe that achieving common ground is reachable, even though passion appears to be very strained right now.

“My class knows by now that I made a pretty big career change to be here. I was from the mental health field, actually for about 10 or 11 years, and I decided to come to law enforcement. And for many years, a reoccurring question continued to weigh on me. And my question was, what more could I be doing right now that will allow me to make a bigger impact on my community tomorrow? Throughout this

academy, my emotions and my thoughts surrounding my decision to make this were very up and down, and that weighed on me a lot, especially in the beginning, when everything was so new. But lucky for me, I was around some great cadets that kept me on the positive path toward a greater goal.

“We have inspired people themselves more than ever. We need those better angels of our nature to show courage to do as necessary in order to see positive progress in our world. And those better angels are every single one of you guys.

“The more I’ve been around you guys, the more I realized how lucky your agencies are to have you on the force fighting this good

fight. all were not forced to be here. You chose to be here to further your careers. But most importantly, we have shown you already a set of positive examples.

He also reminded them to take care of their mental health.

“In closing, I can’t stress this enough, and I’ll put on my previous career hat for a second. Please take care of yourselves. Seriously, please take care of yourselves and seek assistance when needed. If you’re unable to reach out to anyone within your department, reach out to me. Reach out to someone in this class. We’re in this together, and we have been for the last six months, and I hope that continues.”

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“During COVID, it was really important because a lot of people were trying to keep their house clean and sanitized,” said Lauren English-Thurman. “Our motto is a clean home is a healthy home.”

Every home is cleaned and disinfected during every visit, she added. English-Thurman said that some of their customers utilize their services because they physically cannot clean or do it themselves.

“I get the most joy when we can go in and help

them, and then they’re so appreciative because it helps their overall quality of life to have a clean home,” Thurman-English added. “And it definitely helps the busy moms working and things like that, but I find the most satisfaction when I can help somebody that would not otherwise be able to do it.”The company employs around 10 to 12 employees at each of its offices, in both Waco and Belton. Each employee is well-trained, screened and has passed a background check. They are also insured, bonded and carry workers’ compensation.

“I think what sets us apart is we’re family owned and operated,” English-Thurman said. “We pay special attention to detail. I talk to our customers on a regular basis, build a relationship with them, so that we can customize their cleaning.”

English Maids is a member of The Cleaning For a Reason Foundation and offers free cleanings to women receiving cancer treatment. For more information, visit www.englishmaids.biz or call 254-231-0583.

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